

# ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

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AND BOOK REVIEWS, ETC.

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Organ of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR

# J. V. STALIN

1879-1953

WHAT do members of the Society for Cultural Relations, with their particular interest in cultural developments in the USSR, and in cultural relations between the peoples of our two countries, owe to the great Joseph Stalin?

His death is mourned, and his varied triumphs are gratefully praised, by hundreds of millions all over the world, from many aspects and for many reasons. But in the twenty-nine years in which he led the new Socialist world, what are the things achieved by him and under his inspiration for which we in the SCR must be especially thankful?

Others have thanked him for carrying the building of the Socialist state to the threshold of communism, for his great share in the military defeat of fascism, for the strength and richness he has brought to the prosperous, peace-loving new world. It is our special privilege to record with gratitude the new conception he has given to the world of the value of the human being, of the dignity of man, and of the wide cultural and educational development based on Socialist security.

Today, thanks to his work and to the work done under his inspiration, the personality of man is no longer cramped; he is not the sport of economic power wielded by minorities whose interests conflict with his; "the common man" is no longer starved or nourished, or employed or unemployed, or stinted of education or strait-jacketed by narrow class-education, or in or out of the armed forces or the jails, according as it suits the interests of a small ruling class to make him. Man has no longer, in Stalin's country

and its neighbouring lands, to eat up his energy and his courage in battles against this powerful class; nor is he weaker or poorer because he happens to be a woman, a nomad, a Jew, a coloured man, or a "colonial". For man now, thanks to Stalin, is in Stalin's words a conscious member of a community whose united purpose it is to secure, by the efforts of all its members, that he and every other man, regardless of sex, race or origin, shall be safeguarded against the economic ills that used to harass them (and still harass men in the old world outside); and, with those economic safeguards, they win ever greater cultural advances.

Today, all of them, those that were backward and those that were less backward, are free to march forward to higher conditions of education and culture; they form already a new mankind, a new kind of man, destined to live richly and happily in a world of peace, enjoying a cultural wealth far surpassing the limited class culture which a tiny percentage of the most fortunate alone enjoyed in the old tortured world, and enjoying it all the more fully just because it is shared by all of them—writers, engineers, labourers, peasants, Uzbek, Yakut, Gipsy, Great Russian, negro, woman, ex-serf, or soldier.

That is the particular triumph we celebrate. So we say: Thank you, Joseph Stalin, for the cultural human development, for the conscious purposeful humanism that you have brought to the lives of all who have eyes to see, minds to understand, and hearts to rejoice. We and our fellow men have, of course, many, many more achievements than that for which to thank you; but for that alone our gratitude is so full that there can never be words enough to express it.

We will thank you more truly with our deeds, by working for and helping to build, on the foundations you have taught us to understand, for ourselves and all others, a world of peace and growing culture.

D. N. PRITT.

# SOVIET STUDIES IN ENGLISH HISTORY

Academician E. A. Kosminsky

Delivered in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge,  
Birmingham and London, December 1952.

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I HAVE more than once been asked what it was that induced Russian historians to interest themselves in the history of England, and particularly in the history of the English Middle Ages. Why is it that in Russia, and particularly at Moscow University, there has been established a long-standing tradition of studies in the history of medieval England, and notably its agrarian history?

This tradition, bound up with the names of Kovalevsky and Vinogradov, goes back to the 70s and 80s of the nineteenth century. Its roots go deep.

All will understand that historians in Russia, which at that time was an agrarian country and had recently lived through the period when the peasantry were emancipated from serfdom, were specially interested in the historical destinies of the peasantry. They hoped to find the solution of many burning questions in the history of countries which had passed before Russia from serfdom to a free peasantry—such questions as that of the peasant community, its fate, its vitality, its capacity for development, its break-up under the influence of developing capitalist relations, and so on.

But why were Russian scholars drawn to the discussion of these questions on the basis of English history? I must point out that they turned not only to that material. There are well-known works by Kovalevsky, Luchitsky, Kareyev, devoted to the history of the French peasantry before the Revolution of 1789. Here the main question was that of peasant property.

But the history of England threw particular light on the problem of the peasantry. It was precisely in England that capitalist development led to the almost complete disappearance of the peasantry. England provided Marx and Engels with material characterising the laws of capitalist society. Lastly, England disposes of a quite invaluable treasury of sources for the social and especially agrarian history of the Middle Ages, in the shape of the Public Record Office and other repositories of ancient manuscripts.

Frederick Maitland, one of the most profound scholars and excellent publishers of the monuments of the English Middle Ages, describes how he first heard of the remarkable treasures of the PRO from a foreigner, the Russian Paul Vinogradov. It was while they were walking in Oxford, on a day in May 1884. The very next day Maitland went to the Record Office: and this was the beginning of his brilliant career in the scholarly study and publication of documents.

Kovalevsky and, still more, Vinogradov may be reckoned the founders of the school of Russian medievalists concerned with the history of England that exists to this day. We may already speak of the fifth generation of representatives of that school. It has never been detached from Russian life. It has been, in the highest degree, distinguished by its topicality, its connection with the problems which present-day life was bringing forward.

Vinogradov was chiefly interested in the serf-owning manor and the community of unfree peasants, and in his researches he rarely crossed the frontier between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. His pupil, Petrushevsky, influenced by the beginning of the break-up of the village community in Russia, made an analysis of the development of the English village in the fourteenth

century. He traced the history of the beginnings of decline in the feudal manor and the village community, and the more and more acute class struggle on that basis which culminated in Wat Tyler's rising.

Savin, another of Vinogradov's pupils, traced the further process of break-up of the rural community, and the development of capitalist relations in the English countryside, in his substantial works *The English Village in the Sixteenth Century* and *Secularisation in England*. In his monographs on the history of individual manors, he paid special attention to the then little-studied seventeenth century. He demonstrated the considerable growth of land ownership by the gentry and of the elimination of the peasantry in this period.

Vinogradov, Petrushevsky and Savin all based their works on the study of the great manuscript material in the Public Record Office and in other English libraries and archives.

Vinogradov's first work, *Studies in the Social History of Medieval England*, was published in 1887. Individual chapters were developed by him into large monographs in English—*Villeinage in England* and *English Society in the Eleventh Century*. Vinogradov belongs to England as well as to Russia, and, of course, is well known in this country.

A number of works by Savin also appeared in English, and exercised a certain influence on the study of problems of sixteenth-century history.

Less known to English historians is Petrushevsky, whose outstanding work\* still remains untranslated. In Russian four editions have appeared, two of them in the Soviet period, even though the work of Petrushevsky is non-Marxist. As a model of the conscientious study of facts it is recommended to students, like the other works of the non-Marxist Petrushevsky.

A new period in the development of Russian historical science was opened by the October Revolution. The triumph of Marxist-Leninist historical theory faced historians with the task of reviewing all the fundamental problems of history. The problem of the history of agrarian relations became specially important in view of the agrarian changes taking place in the Russian countryside. England continued to attract the attention of historians, the older generation of whom were pupils of Vinogradov, Petrushevsky and Savin.

At the risk of seeming immodest, I shall begin my account of Soviet historians with myself. My studies in the history of the medieval peasantry have been concentrated chiefly on the century when the feudal order reached its highest point and began to verge on its decline—the thirteenth century. The best works of Vinogradov were devoted to this century; but they can no longer completely satisfy us. Apart from the fact that his methodological principles are not acceptable to us—I refer to his primarily juridical approach to the phenomena he studied, and his ignoring of the significance of the class struggle—his researches did not give the answer to a number of problems raised by modern scholarship. The question of the diversity of the local forms of manorial structure, the question of the connections of the manor with the market, the development of cash rent, the role of the free peasantry, did not find an adequate reply in his works. Furthermore, a wave of theories rolled over Western scholarship, most vividly expressed in the works of Dopsch, and all unacceptable to us. These theories sapped the very foundations of Vinogradov's views: they proclaimed the primitive community to be a legend, asserted the antiquity of capitalism in the shape of "manorial capitalism", put forward a theory of the constant co-existence of natural and money economy, etc. These theories had a certain influence on Soviet historical science too—reflected in the later edition of Petrushevsky's *Wat Tyler's Rising*.

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\* *Essays in the History of the English State and Society in the Middle Ages* (editions: 1903, 1909, 1930, 1937).



All this made necessary a review of our classical heritage in the sphere of the history of the English peasantry, no less than in others. The review had to be based on sources, moreover such sources as would permit of statistical calculations extending to large areas. The author chose the Hundred Rolls as such a source—one little studied, often difficult to work on statistically, yet throwing light on a number of obscure questions in the agrarian history of the English Middle Ages.

The main questions which the author put were those of feudal rent, its forms and the conditions determining them, and the peculiar features of feudal development in England.

The peculiarity of English feudalism is the existence within it of numerous survivals of earlier pre-feudal relations (first of all in the shape of a considerable stratum of free peasantry) and, on the other hand, its early dissolution. Moreover, these two peculiarities join up: feudal relations dissolve most easily where the survivals of the pre-feudal order are most marked. Cash rent, which is already effectively predominant in the thirteenth century, develops most strongly where serf relations are least developed.

The small fief, in which feudal relations were weaker than in the large, develops in the main in the direction of cash rent and the exploitation of hired labour, while the large fief long retains serfdom and labour-service. The small fief was more easily accessible to capitalist transformation than the larger. The small feudal lord, the knight, ancestor of the future gentry, was an element of bourgeois ferment in medieval England. The study of the small fief, although far from full, became possible only on the basis of the Hundred Rolls.

In this connection the problem of the differentiation of the peasantry and the appearance of a stratum of cottars, still tied to the land and to feudal relations but obliged in part to sell their labour-power, acquires a special importance. I have had occasion to controvert the assertion of some writers, including Petrushevsky, who denied the existence of class struggle in the English village of the thirteenth century and advanced the theory of economic "harmony" between the interests of peasant and feudal lord. My studies have shown the existence of struggle between the peasants and their lords, over rent and over the common land—a subject on which Dr. Hilton has worked in England and our young research student Avdeyeva in the USSR.

My further studies have been connected with the crisis of feudalism in England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They are not yet completed, and I shall not speak of them here.

The thirteenth century is a kind of central point from which the study of the history of feudal England proceeds, forward and backward. Many interesting results may be awaited from the comparison of the Hundred Rolls of the thirteenth century with the eleventh-century Domesday Book. This work was done for Cambridgeshire by my pupil Barg. He traced the almost complete disappearance of the *Terra Regis*, the considerable growth of church landowning, the division of a number of large feudal holdings, the fragmentation of the peasant allotment. He succeeded in achieving a definition of the term *bordarius*, on which much depends in statistical calculations based on the data of Domesday Book.

Another of my pupils, Gurevich, has made his researches in an even earlier period—the Anglo-Saxon epoch from the early Anglo-Saxon laws up to Domesday Book. His basic material was the Anglo-Saxon charters. He traced the appearance of feudal relations as a result both of the dissolution of the village community and of the royal grants of immunity. His conclusion that the small fief came into existence on the basis of the dissolution of the village community, while the large fief did so on the basis of immunity, is very attractive but requires further study and precision.



I could mention a number of other pupils studying the history of feudal England. Gutnova is working on the question of the early Parliament, its social composition and social functions. In doing so she has to study the characteristics of various strata of feudal society. She has demonstrated that the position of the free peasantry in England was far from secure, and that the royal courts defended its interests very badly. Levitsky is working on the history of towns. His dissertation deals with towns at the time of Domesday Book. Ulianov has written a work which gives a vivid picture of life in the English village of the fifteenth century, based on the Paston Letters.

All these, my pupils, and pupils of my pupils, I may be permitted without excessive modesty to classify as my school.

The main works of Professor Semyonov are devoted to the agrarian history of the sixteenth century. Bourgeois historical science in the twentieth century has displayed a tendency to minimise the scope and significance of the agrarian changes of the sixteenth century, to question their revolutionary significance for the English village, to deny their violent character, to minimise the disasters which overtook the peasantry as it lost its land, to see in the agrarian changes of the sixteenth century only the purely economic factors. Turning aside from the unanimous evidence of the publicists and legislators of the epoch, who placed on record both the broad scale and the depth of the social changes which were taking place, these modern research workers have been calculating the data of unquestionably incomplete government inquiries about enclosures, and have as a result secured insignificant figures of lands enclosed and peasant households ruined. They ignore the powerful peasant movements which shook England in the sixteenth century, or suppress the social motives evident in them. Professor Semyonov undertook to review these problems. In his doctoral dissertation, *Enclosures and Peasant Movements in England in the Sixteenth Century*,\* he demonstrated the rapid tempo of the agrarian changes, their violent character and the profound nature of the alterations which were taking place in the English agrarian system at the time. In particular, he demonstrated the considerable scale on which the peasantry was losing its land in the sixteenth century, and the general worsening of the condition of the mass of the peasantry and the agricultural labourers. He brought to the forefront the question of the peasant risings in the sixteenth century, their objects and their programme; and compared them with the peasant movement on the continent of Europe, more especially the great Peasant War in Germany, the famous twelve theses of which they repeat in their demands.

A substantial contribution has been made by Soviet scholars to the study of the problems of the agrarian development of England in the seventeenth century—problems which had been very little touched upon by English students of agrarian relations. Here the works of S. I. Arkhangelsky require special mention.

His principal task was to ascertain the dimensions and character of the agrarian changes which took place during the English bourgeois revolution of 1640-1660, and in the first place of the transfers of landed property. The author was not able to work in the English archives, but he studied the printed materials—Ordinances and Acts, the journals of both Houses of Parliament, the inventories of lands confiscated during the revolution, the documents of the Committee for Compositions, pamphlets and correspondence. This material enabled him to establish the approximate dimensions of the confiscated lands of the Crown, the bishops, chapters and royalist nobles, which were transferred to new owners, almost exclusively the bourgeoisie and the “new gentry”.

Professor Arkhangelsky has shown that the history of England knows of no other such vast transfer of landed property in so short a time: the mobilisa-

\* About to be published. Two articles, *Robert Kett's Rising in 1549* (1935), and *The Rising of Kett of Norfolk and the Enclosures* (1946), have been printed.

tion of lands during the secularisation of the sixteenth century was on a far more modest scale. It was in Ireland that the transfer of landed property took place on the greatest scale: it partly also affected Scotland. The transfer of landed property from the feudal groups to the bourgeoisie and the new gentry, bourgeois in its character, was the most important step in the process of transforming feudal landed property into bourgeois property. That process found its legal expression in the Act of 1646, which abolished feudal knights' holdings and replaced them by free socage which, in essence, was the mask for bourgeois property. The latter also grew as a result of the reinforcement of enclosures and of depriving the peasantry of their lands. Abolishing feudal dues and restrictions for the landowners, the bourgeois revolution did not abolish those dues for the peasant copyholders. The transfer of landed property was accompanied by the frequent expropriation of the copyholders and their replacement by tenants on short leases. The inquiries into the rights of landholders which took place when confiscations occurred led to part of the peasantry being driven from the land. In this way the bourgeois revolution, apart from passing over a considerable portion of landed property from feudal to bourgeois owners, promoted the further expropriation of the peasantry and the transition from feudal to capitalist rent.

Arkhangelsky's researches have provided new material characterising the English revolution of 1640-60 as a bourgeois revolution. They have introduced much that is new into the study of English agrarian history in the seventeenth century, showing what an important part that century plays in the history of the capitalist reconstruction of the English village. Nevertheless, apart from the work of Professor Tawney and the scholars whom he has trained, the seventeenth century remains one of the "dark ages" in the agrarian history of England. There are still mountains of material bearing on this period, preserved in the Public Record Office and other archives, which remain unpublished and unstudied.

The work of V. M. Lavrovsky, *Parliamentary Enclosures of Common Lands in England in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries (1795-1815)*, is devoted to the final stages of the great historical drama of the expropriation of the English peasantry. In studying this question, V. M. Lavrovsky drew on materials which had been little utilised by previous investigators—the Enclosure Awards and Land-Tax Assessments. He used the method of sample studies of the great statistical material. He studied more than fifty enclosure judgments, covering about 100,000 acres and drawn from different districts and villages of different types—those with a considerable proportion of peasantry, those where there were still noticeable survivals and, finally, those with but insignificant traces of that class which once formed the backbone of the people of England. The researches of Lavrovsky have again confirmed and enriched with new documentary data the proposition of Marx that the English peasantry as a class had ceased to exist by the middle of the eighteenth century. In spite of the fact that Parliamentary enclosures of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries naturally dealt with mainly backward parishes, where enclosure had not taken place earlier, the analysis of land ownership in these parishes reveals a picture of the complete destruction of the peasantry by advancing large-scale landowning and capitalist farming. Even in those parishes where the peasantry had been best preserved, it represented only the deformed fragments of the former class. The old peasant village in essence had already been destroyed.

The work of Soviet scholars has subjected to radical review a number of basic questions in the history of agrarian relations and of the peasantry in England from the eleventh to the nineteenth centuries. Many problems have had new and independent solutions, while some of them have been posed and solved for the first time. All the work of Soviet historians takes its point of

departure from the same basic methodical principles, examining the agrarian history of England as the history of the rise, development and dissolution of the feudal mode of production, and of feudal exploitation which found its expression in feudal rent, as the history of the replacement of feudalism by the capitalist mode of production, capitalist exploitation, capitalist ground rent. It has brought into the foreground the problem of the development of feudal property and its replacement by bourgeois property, ascertaining in the course of this the role played in the process by the bourgeois revolution of the middle of the seventeenth century which represented the turning point in the agrarian history of England (as also in the history of English industry and commerce, the English state, English foreign policy, English colonial power, English political, scientific and philosophical thought). These questions have been discussed in a collective *History of the English Revolution*, by a number of Soviet scholars, which is now in the press. The researches of Soviet scholars have traced the fate of the English peasantry in the feudal epoch, the struggle over feudal rent which developed in the countryside, the differentiation of the peasantry, the formation of a village bourgeoisie and its resistance, and finally its ultimate destruction.

Not all these questions have been equally worked out. Our work is continuing, extending, becoming deeper, reaching out to ever-new series of problems and involving an ever-increasing number of young research workers. And though there are still many questions requiring special research, it is beyond doubt that a need is maturing for a general work on the history of the peasantry in England.

The works of Soviet scholars on the agrarian history of England have received their recognition in historical literature abroad. At the present time it is hardly thinkable that a serious work of a general character on the agrarian history of England could appear without some knowledge of the work of Soviet historians.

Undoubtedly closer intercourse would be of great value to the historians of both countries. I firmly count on our present meeting promoting cultural exchange and the cause of peaceful co-operation between our peoples.

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*Other historical articles in the ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL :*

*Ancient Khorezm.* By William Watson. **XII, 2.**

*Archæological Organisation in the USSR.* By Professor V. G. Childe. **XIII, 3.**

*Soviet Archæology.* By A. D. Udaltsov. **XI, 3.**

*Soviet Ethnography.* By S. Tolstov. **XI, 4.**

*Teaching British History in Soviet Schools.* By Christopher Hill. **XII, 3.**

*The Formation of the English Nation.* By Academician E. A. Kosminsky. **XIII, 2.**

*The Periodisation of Russian History.* By R. W. Davies. **XII, 4.**

## A footnote by Academician Kosminsky, Moscow, February 1953

I have more than once been asked in England whether we Soviet professors give our undergraduates and postgraduates access to non-Marxist literature: and in particular, whether our undergraduate and postgraduate students are acquainted with the works of British non-Marxist historians. The question itself testifies to the prevailing ignorance of teaching conditions in Soviet universities. Of course, both our undergraduates and our postgraduates study non-Marxist literature and make use of it in their work. They are sufficiently theoretically advanced, however, to approach it with a critical eye.

Not to talk in generalities, I will mention a few of the works which have been used in the preparation of students' and postgraduate theses. Take for example the diploma thesis of my student Ulyanov when completing his course. In addition to his original source—the Paston Letters—he made use of the following British and American writers, whom no one will claim to be Marxists:

Trevelyan, *English Social History*; Bennett, *The Pastons and their England*; Power, *The Wool Trade in English Medieval History*; Stubbs, *Constitutional History*, Vol. III; Denton, *England in the Fifteenth Century*; Ramsay, *Lancaster and York*; Maitland, *Constitutional History*; Davenport, *The Economic Development of a Norfolk Manor*; Pollock and Maitland, *History of English Law*; Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century*; Abram, *Social England in the Fifteenth Century*.

Again, I take the dissertation submitted for her Candidate's Degree by the postgraduate student Avdeyeva. In addition to original sources in Latin and Old French (principally legal documents of the thirteenth century) she made use of several dozen works in English. It would take too long to enumerate them all, but I will mention a few.

Bennett, *Life on the English Manor* (1939); Beveridge, *History of Prices in England*, Vol. I (1936); Cam, *Hundred and Hundred Rolls* (1930); *Cambridge Economic History*, Vol. I (1942); Coulton, *Medieval Village* (1925); Curtler, *Enclosure and Redistribution of our Land* (1920); Denholm-Young, *Seignorial Administration in England* (1937); Gras, *Economic and Social History of an English Manor* (1930); Darby (ed.), *Historical Geography of England* (1936); Homans, *English Villagers in the Thirteenth Century* (1942); Lipson, *English Economic History*, Vol. I (1945); Orwin, *The Open Fields* (1938), etc., and also many articles in the *Economic History Review*, the *English Historical Review*, the *Economic Journal* and other publications.

# MASS EDUCABILITY

## Why Soviet Teachers Are Opposed To Intelligence Testing

G. C. T. Giles

PERHAPS I ought to start by explaining why I chose this particular topic and what I mean by the somewhat jargonesque expression "mass educability". I made the choice because my whole experience as a teacher, extending over nearly forty years, has forced me to the conclusion that in this world of today, and particularly in our own country, the most urgent and vital educational problem is to enable every child to reach a standard of education that will make it possible for him to take a full and active part in the life of the community. That is what I mean by "mass educability".

For some years now I have studied this problem from various angles—first, in the setting of our own British educational system, as an Executive member and officer of the National Union of Teachers, particularly at the time of the framing and popularisation of the 1944 Education Act; secondly, I was able in 1946 to pay a brief visit to the eastern states of the USA and make a study on the spot of the comprehensive school system there; thirdly, I have made three visits to the USSR (in 1925, 1931 and 1952) and have followed fairly closely the development of the Soviet educational system.

Thus I have been fortunate enough to study this question of mass educability under three widely differing systems. I hope I may assume that most of the readers of this article will agree with me on the importance of the question, even if my view of its paramount importance is not accepted by all.

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THERE are, of course, wide differences of opinion as to how far a uniform and universal minimum standard is practicable, what this standard should be, and how the principle, if accepted, should be carried out in practice.

Let me illustrate from Britain and the United States. In Great Britain the principle of mass educability was accepted in 1870. The standard aimed at was at first limited to the "three Rs". The method was the adoption of universal compulsory education, checked and tested by a system of inspection and examination. Since 1870 the period of school life has been gradually lengthened and the standard aimed at gradually raised—if not formally, at least in practice. The 1944 Education Act registered a significant advance by accepting in principle secondary education for all, with a leaving age of sixteen and part-time education up to eighteen. In practice, however, it is widely assumed that a great variation of standard is unavoidable, that at the age of eleven it is desirable to select the children deemed capable of reaching the highest standard, and that about 80% of children are incapable of reaching such a standard and must therefore be given an education of a different kind in different schools.

In the USA there has been a different approach. Here the emphasis has been on *equality of opportunity*, and therefore all children attend the same comprehensive school and have the *opportunity* of reaching the same standard, with the assistance in many states of a high leaving age. In practice the right of the child (or the parent) to select particular courses, and the absence of any prescribed subjects, produces a very wide variation of standard and attainment. Moreover, there is very wide variation from state to state.

In the USSR there has been a different conception again. From its earliest years the Soviet Government has emphasised its conviction that "only a highly



cultured and educated people that has mastered the achievements of science, art and literature, can successfully accomplish the building of a new communist social system" (Medynsky, *Public Education in the USSR*.) This conception was frequently emphasised by Stalin. "We want *all* our workers and peasants to be cultured and educated, and we shall achieve this in time."

Recently Stalin restated this aim in more concrete terms: "To secure for all members of society the all-round development of their physical and mental and intellectual capabilities, so that the members of society may be in a position to receive an education sufficient to enable them to be active agents of social development and in a position freely to choose their occupations and not be tied all their lives, owing to the existing division of labour, to some one occupation" (*Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*).

It is my purpose to describe briefly how the Soviet Government has set about the task of achieving these aims, what it regards as a practicable and *universal* minimum standard, and how far it has progressed towards its aims at the present time.

From the beginning the Soviet Government adopted the principle of the *unified* school. Undismayed by the appalling difficulties of the early years, it set to work to build up a system of universal compulsory education, first from eight to fourteen, later from seven to fourteen, *with a uniform curriculum and uniform standards*. It has insisted throughout on "uniformity and continuity of all links in the public educational system". Last September, in a public interview, the Minister of Education of the RSFSR used these words: "All must complete the seven-year school. It is possible, and that is the art of teaching, to arouse the pupil's interest; that is the teacher's job." The same concept was contained in an answer to a question (from a recent educational delegation) by a professor of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences: "The abilities of *every* individual can be developed in proper conditions." Scores of Soviet teachers are at great pains to convince visitors that they accept this point of view. "We have confidence in our children."

The curriculum of *the seven-year school* is a wide one and has a distinctly academic bias.

Subjects	Weekly number of lessons according to classes							Total study hours for the entire course
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	
Russian language and reading ... ..	15	14	15	8	10	8	6	2,508
Arithmetic ... ..	6	7	6	7	7	2	—	1,155
Algebra, Geometry ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	5	6	362
Natural Science ... ..	—	—	—	2(3)	2	3	2	314
History ... ..	—	—	—	3	2	3(2)	2	314
Constitution of the USSR ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	66
Geography ... ..	—	—	—	3(2)	3	2(3)	2(3)	346
Physics ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	2	3	165
Chemistry ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	3(2)	83
Foreign Language ... ..	—	—	—	—	4	4	3	363
Physical Training ... ..	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	396
Drawing ... ..	1	1	1	1	1	1	—	198
Mechanical Drawing ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	33
Singing ... ..	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	132
Total ... ..	24	24	25	27	31	32	32	6,435

Figures given in brackets indicate the number of weekly hours in the second half of the year.

The seven-year school is at present the foundation of the structure. By 1955 in the larger towns, and by 1960 everywhere, the ten-year school will be compulsory. To that end, a 40% increase in the number of qualified teachers

is laid down in the current Five-Year Plan, and a 70% increase in school accommodation. As a result of these reforms there will be a corresponding modification in the vocational schools, and the lower grade schools will drop out altogether.

The main structure is supported by a very wide provision of creches and kindergartens before formal education begins. It is supported also by a very wide network of "extra-mural" facilities, which are used to assist both the slower child and the more capable, as well as providing cultural recreation of all kinds. This network includes school circles, pioneer palaces, young naturalists' centres, playgrounds, summer camps, libraries, theatres, puppet theatres, films, sports, newspapers and magazines. Nowhere in the world is more care and attention given to children—an investment which undoubtedly returns high dividends by producing a positive attitude to education on the part of parents and children.

All must complete the seven-year course and are tested by examination annually from the fourth year, though not in all subjects until the end of the seventh year. Examinations are partly oral and partly written, and are conducted by a commission including a member of the staff of the school, a representative of the teachers' trade union, and a representative of the Ministry of Education. Those who fail in not more than two subjects may sit again in August; failure in more than two subjects involves repeating the year, and 7% or 8% do so.

No young person can be employed before the age of sixteen, so after the completion of the seven-year school course the pupils have a choice of further courses.

### 1. The ten-year school

Subjects	Weekly number of lessons					Total study hours for the entire course
	Classes 1-7	8th	9th	10th	Total	
Russian Language and Reading ... ..	76	—	—	—	76	2,508
Literature ... ..	—	5(6)	6	5	16.5	544
Arithmetic ... ..	35	—	—	—	35	1,155
Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry ... ..	12	6	6	6	30	990
Natural Science ... ..	9.5	2	2	—	13.5	545
History ... ..	9.5	4	4	4	21.5	705
Constitution of the USSR ... ..	2	—	—	—	2	66
Geography ... ..	10.5	3	2(3)	—	16	528
Physics ... ..	5	3	3(2)	4	14.5	478
Astronomy ... ..	—	—	—	1	1	33
Chemistry ... ..	2.5	2	3(2)	4(3)	10.5	346
Foreign Languages ... ..	11	4(3)	3(2)	4	22	726
Physical Training ... ..	12	2	2	2	18	594
Drawing ... ..	6	—	—	—	6	198
Mechanical Drawing ... ..	1	1	1	1	4	132
Singing ... ..	4	—	—	—	4	132
TOTAL ... ..	196	33	31	31.5	—	9,680

Figures given in parentheses indicate the number of weekly hours in the second half of the year.

In the 1948-49 school year psychology and logic were introduced in 538 secondary schools in twelve big cities (psychology two hours weekly, from the ninth class, and logic two hours weekly from the tenth class). In 1949-50 and 1950-51 they were extended to some 2,000 city schools and 3,000 rural schools respectively. This increases the weekly hours to thirty-three and changes the hours for physics and chemistry.

2. The *Tekhnikum*, which usually offers a four-year vocational course including general education up to the standard of the ten-year school.



3. *Industrial and Agricultural Training Schools*, which also provide a vocational course of two to three years ; in these schools also a minimum of 25% of the time is set aside for general education, which includes Russian, mathematics, physics, political studies, mechanical drawing.

There are in addition a number of special schools for art, music and drama, which cater for talented children selected from all parts of the USSR. Though these are specialist schools, there is the same insistence on a high level of general education. This is true also at the other end of the scale, in the schools for handicapped children, which cater for about 1% of the child population. In these schools there is an emphasis on medical treatment which, it is claimed, enables a majority of handicapped children to attain the normal standard of general education, though a longer period is required.

It will be seen from this brief survey that the aim of Soviet educators is a universal minimum standard of general education for all children. What is the standard of attainment achieved up to now ? Without a much closer and more detailed investigation, only a very tentative estimate is possible. There is, however, considerable evidence available from British teachers who have taught, or are teaching, in Soviet schools, from textbooks in use, from the achievements of Soviet universities, which are recruited from the Soviet schools, and from the general impressions of educationists who have visited the USSR. On the basis of this evidence, it is my opinion that the standard of the ten-year school corresponds very closely to the old matriculation standard in Britain. If this estimate is justified, it means that the majority of Soviet children now reach by the age of seventeen an academic standard approximately equal to that reached by our grammar school children a year younger. In ten years' time practically all Soviet children will do so.

How is it done ? Soviet educators start from the assumption that *all children can be educated*—in my phrase, they believe in mass educability ; or conversely, they do not accept the theory of an “ ineducable mass ”. This conviction is not just a blind faith ; it is based on actual experience in a country where illiterates have in a few years reached the highest levels of knowledge and learning, which in a generation has changed from a primitive agricultural community to a highly industrialised one of advanced technique with a numerous body of skilled technicians and scientists. It was this conviction that gave rise to the criticism and eventual abandonment of the use of psychometry or testing, which Soviet teachers took over from foreign (chiefly American) educators and practised on a very wide scale in Soviet schools for grading and streaming, for the fixing of educational standards, and for deciding curricula, time-tables and school organisation.

The revolt against testing came first from the teachers and from parents. Teachers found that I.Q. tests gave results contradicting those obtained by individual observation in school, with a wide margin of error. Moreover, they found that such tests underrated especially children from unfavourable environments. Above all, the generally accepted norms seemed to deny the *possibility* of educating the number of children needed to provide sufficient people qualified up to the necessary standard.

In 1936, after a long discussion by teachers, psychologists and the general public, the assumptions hitherto accepted by the psychometrists were abandoned. Pedology was condemned as a “ pseudo-science ”. Soviet psychologists have since been engaged in establishing a fresh scientific basis for psychology. The general trend of this new approach to psychology has been admirably expounded by Mr. Brian Simon, B.A., in his *Educational Psychology in the USSR* (the text of his lecture under the auspices of the SCR at the Institute of Education of the University of London in February 1952). I am here concerned mainly with the practical effects on the Soviet school, on Soviet teachers and on Soviet children.

The first effect has been that the teacher has come into his own. "If no arbitrary limits can justifiably be set to adult achievement, still less can they be set to the child's development. Since it is teaching and application that determine the quality of achievement and so of personality, it is necessary to pay the greatest attention to teaching methods." (Simon, *op. cit.*) The corollary is that the teacher is a very important person in the community and must be accorded an honoured status. First-hand observation leaves no doubt in my mind that this honoured status has been achieved by Soviet teachers.

The second effect is to emphasise the importance of teaching methods and therefore of the training of teachers. Both in the training colleges and in the school meticulous attention is given to the "science of pedagogy". Successful methods worked out and practised by one teacher or in one school are widely discussed and publicised. Team work by class and subject teachers is fostered by regular and frequent discussion meetings. Every possible opportunity and encouragement is given to teachers to improve their technique and raise their academic and professional qualifications. Help to the individual teacher and to school staffs is regarded as one of the most important functions of the teachers' trade union, and is highly organised. Visual and other aids to teaching are generously provided.

No less important is the attitude to the child. Since application on the part of the child is the decisive factor in his development, individual attention is essential. "The art of teaching", says the Minister of Education of the RSFSR, "is to rouse the child's interest." Every teacher knows that the main handicap in this regard is the size of classes. Nor is it denied that this handicap still persists in the USSR. There are still classes of forty; but the number of such classes is steadily decreasing. In the schools that I visited I did not find a class of more than thirty-four. The planned increase of 40% in the number of qualified teachers and of 70% in accommodation promises an early removal of this main handicap. Meanwhile the wide provision of extra-mural amenities facilitates individual attention. The formal school day is from 8.30 a.m. to 1 p.m., leaving the afternoons free to be utilised either in "circles" organised in or around the school or in the Pioneer Palaces and numerous other institutions which are a feature of Soviet life. To these must be added the extensive network of physical care that surrounds the Soviet child from birth.

Application, however, involves a positive attitude on the part of the child, which can only be induced by a realisation, on the part of children and their parents, that application leads somewhere, that education and study are worth while. This realisation is universal in the USSR, and it is firmly based. Equality of opportunity is complete: there are no barriers of privilege, of sex or of race; the only test is ability to do the job. Nor is that all. The certainty of rapid and steady advancement of the community as a whole has gripped the imagination of the Soviet people. Scientific planning and hard work can overcome and have overcome all obstacles to progress. Labour and study have become a matter of honour, to paraphrase a saying of Stalin's. Surrounded by such an atmosphere, the Soviet child makes the most of the opportunities at his disposal, feeling secure in his present and his future.

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IN attempting to give a brief outline of the contribution that Soviet educators are making to the problem of mass educability, I have been obliged to omit much detail and much argumentation. I would suggest that all interested in education should endeavour by all means in their power to promote a closer and more systematic study of Soviet educational development. Soviet educationists will welcome such interest and study and will give every possible facility. Exchange of experience and information will be to the advantage of both countries and of humanity.

# THE FACTORY AND THE SCHOOL

N. Nadezhda

THE children walked through the broad factory yard, went into the shop and stood as if bewitched in the bright hall filled with the muffled roar of lathes. Automatic turning-lathes, grinding-lathes, milling-lathes. Their eyes were dazzled.

A woman worker presses on a lever, and the punch of a huge press, pulled down on to a plate, turns it into a bowl. A roll of metal ribbon slowly unwinds, a rather small lathe pulls it in and, tapping evenly, chops out a net. The lathe is automatic, and five such machines are controlled by one worker.

The schoolchildren listen attentively to engineer Polozhentsev's explanations. It is amazing how, in talking about engineering and machines, he always remembers what the children have so often heard in physics and chemistry lessons. It is only now that all those processes and laws that used to seem so complicated and incomprehensible have suddenly become clear and simple. Galvano-plastics is a subject long since studied, and now they watch dozens of matt-surfaced bicycle-bell cups, fastened on a special holder, being lowered into an electrolytic bath and coming out of it sparkling and polished—and now you probably won't forget how a part is covered with a thin coating of metal.

They want to understand everything, to look into everything, to see how each of these wonderful units is really worked. The guide fits a hollow cylinder into the vice on the lathe. It can be touched, pulled out, put back again. But Polozhentsev presses a little lever, and air-pressure holds the part in : now you can't pull it out any more. The children watch the flat-grinding lathe attentively, vainly trying to move the metal plate held on the electro-magnetic table. But the leader of the excursion reminds them of the phenomena of electro-magnetism and their uses in industry.

THE friendship between the scholars of Moscow School No. 584 and the workers and engineers of the carburettor factory is of long standing. The factory patrons have helped to do up the school building every year, and they fenced in the playground. The young workers have often taken part in "Saturdaying"\* : they and the children cleaned up the playground together, and they equipped a sports ground. When the teachers of the top classes were planning any distant excursion or interesting evening, or when they met with some difficulty or other, the school said : "Let's ask the patrons!" And the factory helped, lending a car or allowing its "Red Corner"† to be used.

But can all this really satisfy the school nowadays? The Directives of the Nineteenth Party Congress on the Fifth Five-Year Plan speak of general poly-technical education, and point out in particular that this will raise the educated socialist knowledge of the general school and facilitate the pupils' free entry into a profession. This is a large-scale and long-term job. It demands a revision of the curriculum, the introduction of new educational disciplines. But what can be carried out here and now? What must the factory do to help the school bring the pupils' knowledge closer to life and practice, so that scholars who have learnt complex laws of chemistry and physics and done algebraic equations shall not be at a loss with a simple electric iron, shall not be helpless when something needs mending or making at home?

\* *v subornikakh* : voluntary Saturday work on a job of social and public value.

† Room or rooms, in factory or office, set aside for social and cultural purposes.

The factory manager, V. Polyakov, called together the shop foremen, representing the whole works organisation. The head of the school, M. Krukovsky, also attended. They talked about polytechnical education, about the fact that children still learn very little either at home or at school of how to use different tools. Then ideas were put forward about the creation of a school workshop.

There were in the factory some odd out-of-date lathes which could be repaired and reconstructed. The workers of the repair shop and the tool shop stayed after their shifts, got the defective units ready and reconditioned the instruments. It was soon possible to start equipping the workshop. The school set aside a special classroom for it. The young workers went there every free evening. They installed turning and drilling lathes and set up a joiner's bench. They got ready special training appliances for the children—plane-tables, on which were fixed models of cutting, measuring and auxiliary tools. On the walls of the workroom were hung notices on safety technique. In the cupboards there were metal scrap, glue and pieces of wood.

It was ready for use. The best Stakhanovites were sent by the factory as instructors for the school workshop. The high-speed turners S. Kartashov and V. Starovoitov and the fitter I. Prikhotko visit the children regularly and teach them how to use the tools, look after the lathes, mark the finished goods and read the drawings.

The scholars begin with the most elementary things. The youthful fitters under the guidance of I. Prikhotko decided first of all to repair some defective locks. The Stakhanovite showed the children how to dismantle a lock, mark it and file keys. They learned how to work with vices and how to drill holes. Then they could be set to work independently. On the advice of the teacher, the scholars worked at making fretsaws—they would not take long, and then a new fretwork circle could be arranged.

The children are working enthusiastically at the joiner's bench too. They already know how to plane, chisel and drill. On their very first job the scholars made a whole lot of pointers, rulers for geometry lessons and holders for test-tubes. Now they are busy making school equipment—little blocks of different sorts of wood for calculating specific weights, and boards with uneven surfaces for defining coefficients of friction.

Work in the workshop must be so designed that it helps the scholars in their studies, deepens and broadens their knowledge in the field of chemistry and physics, and teaches them to put into practice the information acquired from books. Each circle therefore works on making school equipment and repairing physics apparatus. The youthful turners, having with their own hands turned a Maxwell pendulum, now remember the principle of its motion very well. When the children have mended a galvanometer, an electric engine, a hydraulic suction-pump and an electro-magnet, they have learnt how to handle these devices and have properly grasped the corresponding sections in physics.

But in their own workshop the scholars can become familiar only with the same design of lathes and tools. The foundations of modern production, with its compound high-speed mechanisms, production into which the latest achievements of science and technology are spreading more and more widely, can be learnt only in the factory. The engineers, in collaboration with the Moscow City Institute for Raising Teachers' Qualifications, have worked out a programme of production excursions. They have linked these closely with the educational plans. They have picked out from the technological processes the most characteristic, those which familiarise the scholars with different production processes.

Several excursions have been organised for the children. Tenth-formers have been to the shops of a factory after having studied the melting of metals,

*(Continued on page 29)*

# Shortage of Grannies

## Boris Polevoy

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VASILY RYBNIKOV, team-leader of a heavy-lorry group, had a remarkable quality. He was the Rybnikov who had become famous that spring on the construction sites for the conveyor-belt transport methods he had organised. The quality he had was one he had developed at the front : he could go to sleep anywhere. He had only to close his eyes and he was asleep, no matter what was going on round him ; when it was time to wake up, he woke up, refreshed and clear-headed. The drivers, who had a great respect for their foreman, put his absolute tirelessness down to this ability ; he could stay in his driver's cab for days on end if necessary and yet retain a mental freshness, a clear-headedness, a calmness, a self-controlled manner. And now this man was for the second day suffering from sleeplessness.

He had flown in an open plane recently, in bad weather, to take delivery of a new set of vehicles, "technology" as he called them, at the railway junction. He had got a bad tooth that he had chilled through ; the gums had got inflamed ; his right cheek was badly swollen. He was going back by steamer, and this was his second sleepless night. He had tried out all the pain-relieving medicines there were in the steamer's chemist's shop. Then, at the suggestion of an elderly lady passenger, he had put a quantity of red pepper on the abscess. On the recommendation of his cabin-mate, a Urals assembly team leader, he had rinsed his mouth out with brandy. And—another passenger, a geologist, having assured him that it was a radical cure for all ills whatever—he had drunk some brandy. Nothing was any good. Only walking about seemed to help dull the sharp, nagging, throbbing pain. So, as if on sentry-go, the broad-shouldered man with his wadded jacket huddled round him paced the deck of the small steamer as it moved slowly up the cold river, wrapped in a sullen November fog.

Vasily Rybnikov cursed himself for not having gone by train, cursed the captain for taking his ship up with seemingly deliberate slowness, cursed the damp early November weather, and cursed the passengers sitting at ease behind the broad windows of the saloon listening to the wireless, clattering dominoes on the table, talking of this and that, even laughing. What a mob ! How the dickens could they chatter in that aimless way while this old tub had pretty well got itself stuck in the rain-soaked dusk !

Rybnikov felt particularly peevish towards one wizened little old lady. She was the one who had suggested pepper for his abscess. He had noticed that the moment three or four people got together she was there too. She knew everything, she meddled in everything, she chattered to everyone. A dark-eyed girl of six or so followed her about everywhere, a girl as plump, as tanned, as firm as a gleaming acorn.

There the old lady was again. He could see her through the broad glass of the saloon. The old lady and the child had settled down near some Lenin-grad assembly men who were playing dominoes. What did she want to interfere for ? What did she know about the game ? What was she trailing around on a steamer for with a small girl in autumn anyway ? Done better to have stayed at home and got on with her knitting and gossiping with the neighbours. So Rybnikov grumbled to himself, gingerly testing his swollen cheek, in which the overheated blood was pulsing madly, with the palm of his hand.



The pain had abated a little, and Rybnikov, chilled to the bone, went into the saloon. The passengers were clustering round the armchair where the old lady was sitting with the acorn-girl on her lap. The child was drowsing, her two pigtailed sticking up in the air, her head on the old lady's shoulder, and the old lady was talking. Everyone was listening. The news was about due on the radio, and Rybnikov made to switch it on. Everyone motioned him to keep quiet. Clearly there was general interest in what she was saying.

"Well, you know, mother, I thought we geologists and the gipsies were the only nomads left", rumbled a tall thin chap with a protruding Adam's apple. The one who had made out that brandy taken internally was good for any ailment whatever. "Seems there's a new trade now, mobile granny."

"Don't you laugh, young man. Nothing to laugh at. You married? Family? Wife working? No? Ah, well, it's different for you. No use you trying to understand. Why, I had four sons. The eldest—he was her father (she stroked the head of the little girl, who had fallen asleep on her shoulder)—he was killed in the war. The other three are all alive and they've all got children. They just tear me to pieces between them. Now, mother, come to us. No, no, to us, please, to us, please do us the honour. That's the way they write."

"Your sons, yes, but what about your daughters-in-law?" asked Rybnikov crossly.

The old lady's arrogance and self-confidence annoyed him, and so did all the attention that was being paid to what she said.

"Wasn't the pepper any good, then?" she asked, lifting her head and turning her eyes in their large, round, dark-rimmed spectacles on Rybnikov.

"About as much use as a horse to a dead man."

"Obviously. What a grumpy patient you are!"

"Look, though, mother, what about the proverb, daughter-in-law in the house and everything upside-down? You're not so young, after all." This from an elderly assembly team leader, the one on whose advice Rybnikov had rinsed his mouth out with brandy.

"Certainly I'm getting on in years. What about it? But it's not like it used to be for grannies. There's a shocking granny shortage. D'you think it was all that easy to start with those daughters-in-law? No, young man. I had this whole packet. Quarrelling and remarks and even 'Choose Between Us'. As if I cared! You live the way you like best. I'm my own boss. I've a good pension for my work. My room's mine for the rest of my days, in the factory flats. Nyusha and I are our own bosses. And they don't forget me at the factory. Send me tickets for celebration meetings, and front row at that. They heard my eyesight wasn't so good as it used to be and I had trouble reading; so they got a radio fixed up for me, to keep Granny Ksyusha from getting out of touch with life. Nyusha and I get along all right at home. But those others, without us—"

"The sons or the daughters-in-law?"

"Both. It's all one. There now, my Nyushenka's gone to sleep. Come on now, comrades, suppose you clear the divan and I'll tuck her up there."

She said this with such assurance, as though she were mistress in her own home, that several sunburnt students, returning from their practical building work, made room at once, and the geologist, taking the sleeping child from the old lady's arms, gently tucked her up.

"Well, now, grumpy, you asked if it's the sons or the daughters-in-law", continued the old lady, settling comfortably into her armchair and again turning her eyes on Rybnikov. "Well, I'll tell you. They all get worked up over me. Nothing surprising in that, though. That's how things are today. There's a lot of respect for us old folks. That's how it should be, too. Well, a couple of months ago my son Mikhail, he's a lecture in a Voronezh Institute; and his wife Lydia, she's another scientist, she grew some record strawberry or

something, got a prize for it, too—well, they wrote to me. ‘We’re just starting work with the students . . . Vovka’s not well . . . Do please come, mother dear.’ Fine thing. Vovka ill. That’s bad, you know. So Nyusha and I get ready to go on our travels. And then, all of a sudden, there’s a wire from Sverdlovsk. Must have cost a good fifty roubles. ‘Mummy, do come by plane, please. Got our holidays. Tickets for Sochi in hand. Sending fare here by telegraph. Hugs and kisses, Fyodor, Sima.’ Fyodor’s my other son. Top-line skilled worker at the Urals Machinery Works. A fitter on these walking machines for your construction jobs. Sima, that’s his wife Serafimova, does something or other in the metal shop, and she’s studying at the Institute too. And the postman hands me over the telegraph money order at the same time. Well, what was I to do? Which of them should I go to? Vovka ill over there; three children who’d be left with lord knows who over there; and they’ve got a big flat, can’t leave the flat and all that furniture with just anyone. So while I was thinking it over, what comes but a letter from here. From Senechka. That’s Semyon Petrovich Zaichikov. He’s working on the job here somewhere. Tunnelling specialist. His wife’s Zoyka. They helped build the Metro together in Moscow; she’s something or other important here too. I’m ashamed to say it, but to tell the truth I don’t like her. She’s a bit stuck-up like. ‘Mind your own business’ and ‘I can get along without any advice from you’, and all that. But they’ve got two babies. And so they wrote: ‘Mummy, we know Sverdlovsk and Voronezh are both after you, but do favour *us*: this is a construction scheme of communism; and our fourth home help has gone dashing off on a building course, so we’re up to the eyes; and our job’s just about ready for launching.’”

“Some problem”, said the elderly assembly man; the long walrus whiskers drooping down over his mouth couldn’t conceal his grin. “Fancy having to decide which of ‘em to go to! Take a statesman to do that.”

“It’s all very well for you to grin. This is what Nyusha and I decided. Mikhail and Lydia are nice and kind; but they’re in a big city, and they could easily find someone if they tried. What’s more, there’s her mother; they could call on her if they were really in a fix, couldn’t they? Then Fyodor and Sima, they sent us the passes and the fares, but they’re not really in a hopeless jam. They could send the children to her father. I’ve been there; it’s a fine pleasant collective farm and they live very well. Good for the children, too, with hills and a river. But my youngest now, Semyon Petrovich, even if his wife is a nagger, heaven help her, well, their problem really is difficult. You take on some young thing as a nanny and in a month or so she’s off on a course. Quite right too. She needs a trade. What ever should she hang about being a nanny for, when in a year or so she might become famous? And as for the older people, they’ve all been snapped up out of the surrounding villages long since. Just think what a lot of people have come here! And village grannies aren’t very fond of being other people’s nannies. What on earth for, when the collective farms round here are rich, they’ve got everything. And your own grandchildren are always nicer than anyone else’s children.”

“So you’re going to your stuck-up daughter-in-law after all?”

“Yes. To the stuck-up one. Where else? This is a construction job, and Nyusha and I must do what we can to help. What’s ‘stuck-up’ mean, after all? When I get there she’ll be tickled to death; mummy this and mummy that. Life teaches you your manners. And if she picks on me it’ll be so long and on to the train. I’ve always got my train fare in my pocket, I’ve got my pension, my room’s waiting. We’re independent folk, Nyusha and I.”

Whether the pain had grown less or weariness had caught him up, Vasily Rybnikov fell fast asleep in his armchair to the regular sound of the old lady’s voice. He woke at dawn. Someone was shaking him hard by the shoulder. The geologist from yesterday. He looked worried.

“What a sleeper! D’you come from round here? Tell me, quick, what’s



the stop for Otryadny ? Here, Novaya ? Or go on to the hydro-electric station ? ”

“ What, Novaya already ? ”

“ We’ve been in five minutes or more. ”

Rybnikov flung himself into his cabin and snatched up his case, the geologist at his heels.

“ Well, where is it ? Here or farther on ? ”

“ Here, if there’s any transport. It’s three times as near, But the transport’s frightful, the mud and the roads are shocking. A light truck can’t get through at all, only a heavy lorry and not every heavy at that. I’m getting off ; I’m being met. So long. ”

The geologist wasn’t listening. He vanished and reappeared in a flash on the creaking gangway, with a trunk, a bundle and a pile of bedding. Behind him came the old lady, clutching timidly at his shoulder. The whiskered assembly man was carrying the sleeping child. And hardly had the men got back on deck after seeing the old lady off when the gangway was run up and the ship moved away from the shore, its screw splashing its way through the water.

“ Hey, granny, remember me to Senechka ! Don’t let your daughter-in-law get up to her tricks ! ” could be heard from the fast-disappearing deck.

“ Good lads, good lads ”, said the old lady, waving a small dry hand after the ship. “ Only travelled a little way together and they seem like part of the family. Pity we had to part. ”

“ Better tell me how you mean to get to Otryadny. Is your son sending a car ? ” asked Vasily Rybnikov.

“ I didn’t let him know. They’re just getting something going, why should I bother him with this sort of thing ? ”

“ Oh, lord ! ” said Rybnikov gravely. “ That won’t do. It’s more than thirty miles to Otryadny. And look at the weather ; and these roads, and on the open steppe. ”

Sharp, cold, slanting rain hammered on the iron roof of the landing-stage. Quick angry waves crashed against the side of the wharf. Everything around reeked with damp, raw as an old cellar.

“ I’ll do what the others do ”, said the old woman resignedly.

“ What others ? ”

“ How are *you* going to get there ? ”

“ There’s a truck coming for me. But my job’s in the opposite direction, see ? What possessed you to get off without asking anybody anything ? Fancy just getting off like that, and with a child, too. ”

“ Don’t make such a row, you’ll wake her up ”, the old woman replied quietly, adjusting the shawl round the child. “ We’ll live. We’re not in the States, we’ve got our own people all round us. Wherever we’ve been, Nyusha and I have always managed, and we’ve travelled a lot. Hark. There’s someone hooting. It’s for you, I expect. ”

In the half-light a car horn sounded on the low river-bank, loudly and intermittently. Then the steps creaked under someone’s tread, and a sturdy youngster in blue overalls, splashed with mud from head to foot, came on to the landing-stage. When he saw Rybnikov, who was holding his cheek again, he cast down his eyes with a guilty look.

“ Sorry, Vasily Ivanovich. The lorry got stuck in the mud three times. The mud beats all. Everything’s swimming. Hardly got here as it was. ”

“ Take these things, ” said Rybnikov, with a jerk of his head towards the old lady’s baggage. He picked up the little girl himself, and said crossly : “ Come on, ma. ”

“ All right. Come on, then, come on ”, agreed the old lady quietly, looking round in a businesslike manner to see there was nothing forgotten.

She seemed to take his offer for granted ; she showed no surprise ; she didn't start showering thanks on him ; she displayed no special feeling. Only when Rybnikov told her to get in the driver's cab did she protest. How could he ride outside, in the back of the lorry, in that wind ? When she saw that all her arguments merely aggravated Rybnikov's surliness, she gave him her big shawl and made him promise to wrap himself up in it for the ride.

The driver was plainly upset at his famous chief having to bump about in the back and at going some thirty miles out of their way, and tried to protest, arguing that he didn't know the way and hadn't enough petrol and so forth, but Rybnikov gave him a look that dried up his flow of arguments, and he climbed hurriedly into his cab.

They drove in silence. The child, a hardened traveller, was fast asleep. The grandmother dozed off too. The cold slanting rain poured down the wind-screen so steadily that the wipers seemed to be clearing away a thick gravy rather than water. Every now and then the lorry skidded in mud of one kind or another, and the driver changed gears resentfully, thinking of his chief, who must be feeling shockingly uncomfortable in the back, out on the cold wet tarpaulin.

But Vasily Rybnikov was feeling fine. One of the lorry's heavy jolts had made the abscess burst, and the chief was sound asleep, muffled in the old lady's large warm shawl.

*Translated by E. Fox and S. Jackson.  
From OGONYOK No. 41, 1952.*

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## BOOKS BY BORIS POLEVOY AVAILABLE IN THE SCR LIBRARY

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### *In English*

To the Last Breath.

From Bielgorod to the Carpathians

A Story about a Real Man.

We Are Soviet People.

Also, in SOVIET LITERATURE, Nos. 6 and 12 of 1952, short stories on the people who helped build the Volga-Don Canal.

### *In Russian*

Povest' o nastoyashchen cheloveke.

My—sovetskiye lyudi.

Zoloto.

# WORK ON HISTORICAL CONCEPTS IN CLASSES V TO VII

A. A. Yanko-Trinitskaya

ABSTRACT concepts and their lack of visual character complicate a teacher's work, particularly in the lower forms, where the children's thought-processes are still concrete. If, in addition, the teacher fails to explain the meaning of the historical concepts, then the pupils will only remember mechanically the facts they have learned, and will be unable to follow the cause-and-effect connections between them or to understand the significance of the historical phenomena concerned.

The teacher has to deal with concepts varying in both significance and scope. His basic problem is how to make his pupils comprehend categories which reflect the basic laws of development of human society, such as "social formation", "class", "state", "class struggle", and so on. The pupils come to these basic categories through mastering the characteristics of broad historical concepts such as "a slave-owning state", "a class of feudal lords", "the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie", and so on.

The teacher also has to work on concepts which are less significant and narrower in scope, but without which his pupils cannot attain a deeper conception of history. There are, of course, different methods of studying concepts of differing scope. The teacher can gradually reveal the meaning of historical categories and broad historical concepts by accumulating new characteristics as he goes through the course to be studied.

Thus, the teacher should, for instance, use the term "slave-owning state" in the very first lessons in Class V; he should explain the meaning of this idea when his pupils are going through the history of the ancient East, of Greece and Rome. The category "state" will be understood only after the pupils have become acquainted with states of differently class-divided formations. The course on the Constitution in Class VII will also enable the pupils to get to know the concept "socialist state" and to understand the profound difference between a socialist state and class-divided states, and in this way the scope of the category "state" will be further broadened.

A series of tests has already been carried out to investigate the methods of study of particular broad historical concepts. (See article by Redko in *The Teaching of History in Schools*, 1949, 2, and article by Klassen, *ibid* 1951, 1.) The aim of this article is to help the teacher in his study of narrow historical concepts, without an understanding of which no pupil can grasp either the content of the history course in the syllabus or the basic historical concepts and categories.

## Work on the Creation of Concrete Ideas in Pupils' Minds

IT IS essential to build up the study of historical concepts on the foundation of the concrete ideas formed in the pupils' minds in the process of studying historical facts. The teacher should see to it that the ideas that arise in his pupils' minds are as clear and as vivid as possible. It will then be easier for him to select the essential characteristics of the idea to be explained. The clearness of an idea depends on the visual character of the teaching and on the ability of the teacher to distinguish a series of characteristics pertaining to the idea.

The teacher can achieve visual character in different ways. First of all his story must be graphic. Literature and documents can play a large part here. Let us see how the use of literary images can help the teacher to explain the meaning of such difficult concepts for a Class V as "demos" and "aristo-

crats". The Class V pupil thinks in concrete images. His notion of class inequality is essentially the idea of "rich" and "poor", and he naturally tries to transfer these concepts to the concepts "eupatrides" (aristocrats) and "demos". The ideas "noble" and "base" are completely incomprehensible to an eleven-year-old Soviet child, for he has not yet acquired the necessary ideas from literature, and in our society the content of these words is entirely different in meaning.

The concepts "aristocrats" and "demos" should first be mentioned in the lesson on the subject of *The Formation of the State in Ancient Greece*. The teacher should already, however, have prepared the ground in his lessons on the Greek epos, including not only episodes needed to understand the main story of the Iliad and the Odyssey, but also extracts that will help his pupils to grasp the concepts "aristocrats" and "demos" later on.

In the lesson on the formation of the state in Greece, the teacher will as yet be able only to mention the figures of Priam, Agamemnon and Alcinous, with whom his pupils are already familiar, and to explain that these so-called "kings" were really the leaders of the tribes and clans and—together with the bodyguards and elders—constituted the "clan nobility". In this way a difficult concept will be rendered concrete by images familiar to the pupils.

The concentration of power in the hands of the aristocracy can be illustrated by scenes from Thersites's beating and Telemachus's conducting of a popular assembly. The description of Alcinous's palace and the scenes of the sharing of the loot by Agamemnon give an excellent idea of the wealth of the aristocracy. If the pupils have already been made acquainted with these scenes they will find it easy to distinguish the characteristics of the difficult new idea.

The concept "demos" is contrasted with the concept "clan nobility". Yet if we confine ourselves merely to negative characteristics—the *demos* did not come from the elders or leaders and possessed neither political power nor vast tracts of land—then we narrow down the concept, and in the child's imagination "demos" will coincide with the concept "poor peasant". To avoid this mistake, the teacher will have to go on working on the concept "demos" in the lesson on *The Formation of the Athenian State*, drawing his pupils' attention to the fact that the development of crafts and trading enabled the *demos* to get rich, and pointing out that the *demos* included not only the peasants but also the town population, which had partly succeeded in enriching itself without having been granted any access to power.

Thus literature will help the teacher to form clear images in his pupils' minds, as a basis for the new ideas that have to be learnt. Documents also can help in this way. Visual aids will also help to form clear images in the pupils' minds.

Here is an example of the application of visual aids when studying "slave-owning democracy", a difficult concept for pupils. The concept "slave-owning democracy" can first be introduced in the lesson on *The Reforms of Cleisthenes*; it is, however, impossible to explain the meaning of this concept fully in this lesson, for the pupils as yet know nothing of the development of slavery in Greece and cannot realise in a concrete way how the Athenian state was governed: consequently, neither "slave-owning" nor "democracy" is an accessible idea to them. What is most difficult for them is the concept "democracy", or rather the union of the two ideas "slave-owning" and "democracy". What they have learnt about the concept "democracy" is incompatible with the concept "slave-owning", of which they have already formed an idea from the previous course. The definition given in the textbook does nothing to help explain this idea. It is the teacher's job to show that a new political regime was established in Athens—a democracy, but a democracy existing for slave-owners only.

Work on the school wall-picture *Popular Assembly in Athens* will help to solve this problem. When explaining the role and functions of the popular assembly after the reforms of Pericles, the teacher should draw the pupils' attention to the fact that the square is crowded with common people, and should emphasise that it was not only the Athenians but people from all the villages of Attica who assembled here. The Athenian popular assembly, at which every problem raised by the orator was keenly debated, should be contrasted with the popular assembly in aristocratic Sparta, which adopted or rejected the proposals of the Council of Elders in silence. It should be explained that everyone taking part in the assembly had the right to put forward a proposal or to state his opinion of anyone else's proposal. It must be stressed that a proposal adopted by a majority of the popular assembly was passed on for implementation to officials elected by the popular assembly or appointed by lot.

In this way the pupils will form a concrete picture of democracy in the Athenian republic. But this is only part of the problem : it is important to point out that the rights mentioned above were enjoyed only by those who were to a greater or lesser extent slave-owners, and that not even all slave-owners possessed full rights. For this purpose the teacher should dwell on the composition of the popular assembly (not a single woman is to be seen in the picture), point out the Scythian police-force (which saw to it that not one *metoikos*, let alone a slave, mingled with the crowd of voters), and explain that only slave-owners took part in the popular assembly ; even the very poorest of slave-owners, who had no means of buying slaves, were interested in preserving the slave-owning regime.

Visual aids can be used in explaining the meaning of a number of historical concepts. In particular, in working on the concept "despotism", the wall-picture *Eastern Despotism* can be used. Unfortunately, school wall-pictures have been issued on the history of the ancient world only, and that so long ago that in most schools they have by now become completely useless.

Diagrams, too, can be extremely useful when studying the meaning of a historical concept. A diagram seems to make the concept concrete in cases where neither the teacher's narrative nor a picture can do so. Let us examine the use of a diagram as an example of the way a concrete idea of the colonate is formed in the pupils' minds.

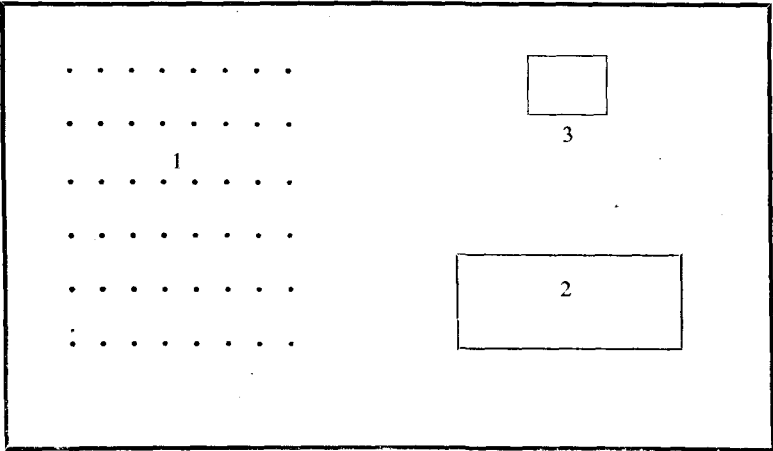


DIAGRAM I: LATIFUNDIUM

1. Gangs of slaves working on the latifundium.
2. Slaves' barracks.
3. Overseer's house.

The teacher should first mention how the immense latifundia of slave-owners were worked before the crisis of the third century, making use of Diagram I, which shows a latifundium worked by gangs of slaves. After explaining the terrible exploitation and cruel treatment of the slaves, the teacher should make it clear that by the second century the Romans were forced to abandon their wars of plunder and go over from attack to defence, and that as a result the influx of slaves ceased ; it now became unprofitable to use slave labour to work the land, since it cost a great deal to acquire and keep slaves, while their bad work exhausted the soil. For this reason the slave-owners went over to a new economy. Here the teacher should draw another diagram.

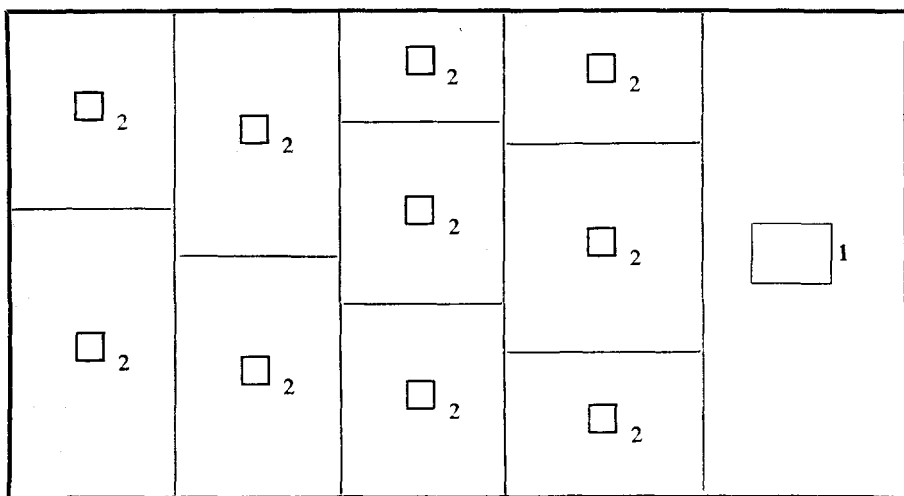


DIAGRAM II : COLONATE

1. Overseer's house.
2. Plots rented by coloni, with their houses.

The teacher should explain that the slave-owners began to divide up the land into separate plots and to lease these to ruined peasants and needy town-folk who had lost their employment during the general crisis of the economy. These formerly free tenants were gradually turned into a dependent peasantry, tied to the land they worked and dependent on its owners. As well as to these *coloni*, the owners of the land began to offer individual plots to certain slaves ; this increased their interest in their work although they paid a huge rent. The diagram will help the pupils to understand the transition from the large-scale economy of the latifundium worked by gangs of slaves to the system of small rented holdings.

Diagrams of this kind can be used in all cases where the concept is connected with forms of land-ownership or land-utilisation ; for instance, when pupils are introduced to the process of enclosures and to the formation of the new gentry in England. (In the latter case the manor estate should first be drawn on the board in chalk, divided up into the peasants' individual plots, and then the boundaries between these plots should be rubbed out.) A diagram will make historical phenomena concrete, and will help pupils to distinguish their basic characteristics and thus to master the concept.

### How to Distinguish and Generalise the Essential Characteristics of a Concept

THE methods examined above help to create the ideas at the base of the concepts being studied. When distinguishing and generalising the essential characteristics of concepts, the teacher can proceed by two methods : (1) Distinguish



the essential characteristics by surveying a number of phenomena of the same kind and then generalising from them. (2) Examine in detail one such typical phenomenon, distinguish its essential characteristics, and then show that they are characteristic of all events of the same kind.

The former method is the more correct. If the pupil is given the opportunity of distinguishing the essential characteristics of a number of phenomena of the same kind, then he will usually approach the generalising of his own accord, and independent generalisations are more lastingly grasped than those apprehended from the lips of the teacher.

Let us examine the method of study of the concept "feudal institutions". As they go through the course, the pupils will first become acquainted with the rise of the States-General in France, at a time when it had become impossible to ignore the towns, which had developed considerably in the fourteenth century and were supplying the kings with money. The States-General consisted of the representatives of three estates, their activities reflecting the interests of the ruling feudal class (including the clergy) and the upper strata of the urban population. The basic function of the States-General was to give assent to the levying of new taxes, and it was by this means that they strove to achieve a certain limitation of the king's power.

These characteristics, however, do not exhaust the concept "States-General". The estates sat separately in the assembly, and—owing to the lack of common interests between the two first and the third—the States-General never really succeeded in restricting the royal power in France. But these last two characteristics do not explain the meaning of the general concept "feudal institutions", being peculiar to this particular historical phenomenon.

When they become acquainted with Parliament in England, the pupils will also discover a number of characteristics peculiar to this particular feudal institution, namely the common interests of the representatives of the burgesses and the knights in the House of Commons, the transformation of Parliament into a legislative body, and so on. When the teacher directs the attention of his pupils to the uniqueness of Parliament and its difference from the States-General, he should at the same time, however, emphasise also the features these institutions have in common, features characteristic of the concept "feudal institutions" itself.

When they come to study the history of Poland at the end of the course, in Class VII, it will be easy for the pupils to grasp the concept "sejm"; if the teacher points out that the *sejms* were institutions of the szlachta estate, it will recall to his pupils' minds the typical characteristics of feudal institutions, and he will then only have to point out the peculiarities of the Polish *sejm*.

The teacher can also approach the study of such concepts as "the Reformation", "absolutism", and so on, by this method of distinguishing the essential characteristics in a number of phenomena of the same kind.

## **Mastery of Historical Concepts by the Pupils**

WE have mentioned that at the base of every concept there should lie clear ideas formed from the study of concrete historical material. It is, however, sometimes necessary to introduce terms corresponding to a given concept before the pupils have succeeded in accumulating the necessary ideas. We employ such terms as "state", "class", and so on, long before pupils are fully aware of their meaning. The terms "feudal lord" and "serf peasant" appear in the textbook long before their characteristics are known to the pupils, and so on.

In all such cases, the teacher, if he does not want his pupils to learn formulae mechanically (which always leads merely to dogmatism), and wishes to make them really master the meaning of the historical concepts, must not demand from his pupils any definition of the concepts until they have accumulated the necessary number of characteristics relating to the idea in question.



In a Sverdlovsk school a teacher gave a definition of dispersed and centralised manufacture from material on the organisation of the Wool Guild (*Arte della lana*) in Florence in the fourteenth century. Later, when he was taking the subject *England in the Sixteenth Century*, he asked for a definition, and his pupils replied that dispersed manufacture is where the making of a product starts and centralised is where it is finished off. The concepts had been explained by an example that was not typical, and the secondary characteristics peculiar to production in the Wool guild had overshadowed the essential characteristics.

The method of comparing and contrasting the new concept with one already mastered plays a big role in the study of historical concepts. In essence, a set of concepts is really grasped by pupils only when they are enabled to compare them with new ones. For instance, pupils properly understand the concept "slave" only when they become acquainted with the concept "serf". Hence the method of comparison and contrast must play a large part in the study of historical concepts. This method can be applied both to the process of learning new material and to lessons for generalisation and revision. It is sometimes even possible in a revision lesson to introduce a new term relating to concepts with which the pupils are already acquainted, but the exact name of which they do not yet know. Terms which give verbal designation to familiar concepts will help pupils to grasp new concepts later on.

### **Consolidating and Testing the Pupils' Assimilation of Historical Concepts**

BESIDES explaining the meaning of historical concepts, it is necessary to fix them in pupils' memories and also to test how these concepts have been understood, whether the pupils apply this term or that correctly and whether they understand what meaning lies behind them.

One of the ways of securing this is to include a definition of the concept in the homework and make the pupils copy out the historical terms in a phrase-book. Experience shows that if a definition is copied out (provided, of course, the pupils already have a proper understanding of it), it is more easily grasped and remembered. If there is no definition of the concept in the textbook, the teacher should dictate one to the class. Characteristics that are written down are remembered better.

In certain instances it is possible to explain the meaning of a concept in class and tell the pupils to write a definition of it themselves at home. (The task of writing a definition independently is very useful, but it can be done only after the teacher has taught the pupils how to write a definition.) In such a case it is necessary to discuss the homework in class, otherwise pupils may learn an incorrect definition. It is very useful to include questions on the definition of concepts in test work, or to phrase an oral question in such a way that the pupil is forced to make use of one concept or another; the teacher is thus able to judge whether he has understood the meaning of the concept correctly.

Test work of this kind carried out in some Sverdlovsk schools showed serious mistakes in defining the concept "manufacture", and confusion in the use of such important concepts as "slave", "peasant", "squire", "burgess", and so on. In one school a girl, questioned on the difference between a feudal lord and a slave-owner, answered that the feudal lord had a natural economy while the slave-owner had hired slaves. Another girl, asked what the rich group of burgesses holding power in the towns was called, answered "feudal lords". In another school, a pupil, speaking of the enclosures, said, "the capitalists began to drive the peasants from their land". When pupils were asked to define the characteristics of the concept "feudal lord", they did not quite clearly understand the term "natural economy". Among the answers

were such expressions as "the feudal lord had his own natural economy", "the feudal lord owned land and he had a natural economy as well", "feudal lords lived on a natural economy". Once they had realised their mistake, the pupils answered correctly at a second test that "a natural economy is an economy where nothing is bought or sold and everything needed is produced on the spot".

If the teacher discovers a bad error in understanding the meaning of a concept, he should not merely correct the pupil but find out at once whether his other pupils have properly understood the meaning of the concept in question. We have heard in tests such expressions as "town peasants", "ruling classes, that is feudal lords and bourgeoisie" (during a lesson on fourteenth-century France), showing a complete lack of understanding of the meaning of the concept and of the historical material itself. The attention of the class should have been drawn to these serious errors; the teacher, however, contented himself with lightly correcting those who were answering, which not only did not enable him to find out whether the class understood the meaning of the concept, but did not even benefit the pupil being questioned, for a casual correction such as "I wouldn't say that" or "the bourgeoisie was hardly ruling" did not even show him where he had gone wrong.

WE have tried to show methods useful to the teacher in his work on historical concepts. It is hoped that teachers from other towns and districts will respond to this article, which summarises the author's own personal experience and that of history teachers in Sverdlovsk.

*Translated by Kathleen Bird*

*Abridged from PREPODAVANIYE ISTORII V SHKOLE, 1952, 1*

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## THE FACTORY AND THE SCHOOL

*(continued from page 17)*

the application of hard alloys and the use of electricity in chemical processing. Sixth-formers have been to the carburettor works in connection with their study of the Stalin Constitution. In the lessons the teacher has spoken of public property, of socialist ownership and of industry. In the factory the school-children saw with their own eyes how a large-scale state enterprise works. They were shown new techniques and were told the history of the works and how a great production team lives and works. The children learnt about the outstanding achievements of the Stakhanovites and about inventions and rationalising proposals, they were shown the factory club, where interesting evenings and lectures are arranged, they were told how the youth of the factory study in the evenings at schools for young workers, at technical schools and at various courses and circles.

And perhaps, as they went away behind the excursion leader through the spacious shops, many of the scholars were thinking of how honourable and joyful a thing it is to work in a Soviet enterprise, and were dreaming of controlling just such mighty lathes, of working in laboratories or on assembly conveyors. The choice of a profession! What a grave and responsible step it is in everybody's life! And if in childhood you have already got to know various fields of technology, if at the school bench you have already learnt to grasp productive processes, how simple and easy it will be for you to choose a job after your own heart, a job that you can put your whole heart and soul into!

*Translated by S. Jackson and E. Fox  
From TRUD, 18.1.53*

# Book Reviews

## STALIN ON SOVIET SOCIALISM

WHEN a new type of social organisation is brought into being, and its position is consolidated, its social scientists inevitably begin to generalise from its experience. They begin, that is, to try to express the essence of the new society in the form of new theoretical propositions concerning its basic social and economic relationships. Thus Adam Smith, observing the new capitalist society which was forming before his eyes in the second half of the eighteenth century, tried to build up a new set of theoretical generalisations, a new social pattern as it were, in order to explain the way in which the new society worked. And in one way or another, consciously or unconsciously, the same sort of thing is invariably done whenever any great social change occurs.

The process whereby the elements of the new social pattern are evolved is generally a fairly long and difficult one. All sorts of vital questions may present themselves for solution. How far can the theoretical concepts used to explain the working of the old society be taken over to explain that of the new? How far is it necessary to replace the old concepts by new ones? Is the new society "subject to law" in any significant sense of these words? If so, what are the actual laws which are in operation? Do laws operate in the same way as they did in the old society? None of these questions is easy to answer, and serious differences of opinion concerning them are bound to arise.

In the Soviet Union, these questions have been hotly debated for many years, and, as was to be expected, it has been in the field of political economy that the argument has been most intense. Since 1943, the published writings of Soviet economists dealing with these matters have generally followed more or less faith-

fully a line which was laid down in a famous article of that year entitled *The Teaching of Political Economy in the Soviet Union*. It was not until the publication last year of the work now under review\* that the outside world was made aware of the fact that an important controversy over this line had been going on behind the scenes for some time. In his last work, Stalin came down definitely on the side of the opponents of the 1943 line.

The 1943 article stated that the economic laws of socialism were fundamentally different in their "character, content and method of action" from the economic laws of capitalism. It seemed to suggest in places that because of the vital role played in economic life by the Soviet state, mankind under socialism could somehow, in a manner not very clearly explained, make its own economic laws. Stalin, on the contrary, while agreeing that most of the economic laws of socialism are very different in their *content* from those of capitalism, argues that they are not at all different in their character and method of action. The laws of political economy, he says, under socialism as well as capitalism, are objective laws, reflecting "law-governed processes which operate independently of the will of man" (p. 5). To suggest that mankind can somehow make its own economic laws under socialism is not only to destroy political economy as a science but also to lay society wide open to the worst kinds of adventurism. On this basis, Stalin embarks upon a fascinating discussion of such matters as the operation of the Marxist "law of value" under socialism, the "basic economic laws" of modern capitalism and socialism, and the scope and method of the political eco-

\*ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF SOCIALISM IN THE USSR. By J. V. Stalin. (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1952. 6d.)

nomy of socialism. No one, and certainly not Stalin himself, would want to say that all the problems described at the beginning of this review have now been completely solved so far as Soviet socialism is concerned, or that all Stalin's formulations are beyond criticism. But Stalin's aim in the present work, I think, was not to provide all the answers himself, but rather to stimulate others to provide them. And this aim will undoubtedly be achieved. Surely few people who read this work could fail to be excited and stimulated by its great originality and manysidedness.

Stalin's article, then, is undoubtedly the most important contribution that has yet been made to the great task of working out a new set of theoretical generalisations appropriate to the new socialist society existing in the USSR today. The need to correct certain distortions which had manifested themselves (particularly in the 1943 article and its progeny), and to indicate alternative paths of research, was indeed an urgent one. The popularity of the 1943 line was, in essence, the product of an over-abundant optimism, a sort of "dizziness with success", which for obvious reasons was widespread in the USSR (and elsewhere) in the immediate post-war years. In the USSR it expressed itself, among other ways, in the feeling that the Soviet government could "do anything", that "nothing is beyond it" (p. 13); that the transition from socialism to communism would be a relatively simple matter involving only technological problems (pp. 72-8); and that there were no longer any contradictions between the forces of production and the relations of production in Soviet society (pp. 56-7 and 75-6). And not only did it tend to bedevil theory: in the field of practice, I think, it may well have encouraged a few people to adopt an unrealistic attitude towards problems of economic organisation, particularly in relation to agriculture—an attitude which, if unchecked, might have led to the open advocacy of adventurist policies in this sphere. An intervention on the highest level, a

sort of "cold shower" (as Mikoyan called it), was evidently called for.

Although Stalin's work deals primarily with the *theory* of the socialist economy of the USSR, and tends in places to be rather abstract in form, it impinges very strongly upon certain practical problems which have recently arisen in the USSR. For example, Stalin's discussion of the operation of the "law of value" under socialism is obviously related to certain difficulties which have apparently been experienced in the practice of economic planning in the USSR. In one of the most intriguing (and, for a Western economist, most difficult) passages in the work, Stalin gives an interesting practical illustration of what he calls "the confusion that still reigns in the sphere of Soviet price-fixing policy"—a confusion which he explains in terms of the inability of the majority of business executives and planners to "take account of the operations of the law of value in their computations" (pp. 24-5). But more important than this is the all-pervading emphasis upon the nature and effects of the specific type of economic relationship which at present exists in the USSR between town and country, and upon the necessity for caution in the selection of policies designed to change this relationship.

The clue to Stalin's treatment of this problem is to be found in his bold classification of the economic relationship between the collective-farm sector and the state sector (i.e., roughly, between the country and the town) as in essence a "commodity relation". A "commodity relation" in the Marxist sense is the relation existing between different producers or groups of producers *who carry on their productive operations independently of one another* and who satisfy their needs by mutually exchanging with one another the respective products of these operations. Stalin's classification, therefore, is designed to place what he regards as the proper emphasis upon the fact that the continued existence of the collective-farm sector alongside the state sector "creates obstacles to

the full extension of government planning to the whole of the national economy, especially agriculture" (p. 76). How, then, are these obstacles to be overcome? Should they be overcome, perhaps, by means of another "revolution from above", similar in character to the measures through which the obstacles to collectivisation itself were originally broken down? Or, alternatively, should they be overcome by means of "gradual transitions carried out to the advantage of the collective farms" (p. 75)? It is the latter approach to the problem that Stalin accepts, and his discussion (pp. 95-104) of the specific measures necessary to "elevate collective-farm property to the level of public property" is one of the highlights of the work.

In this discussion, as in the work as a whole, there is a strong and persistent note of *realism*, clearly intended to counteract some of the effects of that "dizziness with success" to which I have referred above. This implies, of course, that certain problems have recently cropped up in the USSR in which there has been a tendency for too little realism to be displayed, and thus for good counsel to be obscured. But Stalin's realism, it should be noted, is not of the pessimistic, "backs-to-the-wall" type. It is an optimistic, hopeful realism, breathing confidence in the power of the Soviet government and people, given peace, to overcome all the difficulties standing in the way of social advance.

RONALD L. MEEK.

### MR. JASNY AND THE SOVIET NATIONAL INCOME

*THE TIMES* in October 1952 took the most unusual step of publishing four feature articles about the Soviet Union, by a Mr. Jules Menken. They dealt with "Soviet Military Strength" and sought to demonstrate that "the Soviet armed forces and the armament industries that supply them constitute the most formidable war machine the world has ever seen in times of nominal peace".

This is a serious charge; and for such a responsible publication as *The Times* to take the step of printing it, it should, one would have thought, have been backed by a reliable body of evidence.

How does Mr. Menken reach his conclusion? Quite simply. He consults the

recent essays of Mr. Naum Jasny\*, whom he describes as a "distinguished American student of Russian origin", and finds that according to the analysis given there defence expenditure amounted to 19.9% of the Soviet national income in 1948. He then reasons as follows. In 1948 defence expenditure was 17.9% of the Soviet budget; in 1952 it is to be 23.9%. Therefore, "by simple proportion", "about 25½% of the national income" ( $23.9 \times 19.9$ ) is

17.9

devoted to defence in 1952. But, Mr. Menken adds, in 1952 only 14% of the U.S. and 11% of the British national income is being spent on defence. Thus "like is set against like", and suspicion of Russia, war fears and rearmament in the West are justified by economic research.

For the purposes of this review we leave aside many of the dubieties of Mr. Menken's reasoning—his leap from 1948 to 1952 by simple proportion, his cautious (to say the least) estimate of defence expenditure in the West, his happy assumption that the same percentage of the national income devoted to defence in the United States and the USSR means the same amount of defence production (which is equivalent to assuming that the Soviet national income is as large as that of the U.S.).

But what of the *primum mobile* of his edifice, Mr. Jasny's estimate for 1948? This in its turn, although presented in a very complicated way, is based on "simple proportion". Mr. Jasny makes a rough calculation of the size of the Soviet national income in 1948, in the prices of that year, and then takes its main component parts (armed forces, net investment, private consumption, and education and health) and expresses them all in terms of a scale of "real 1926/27 prices" worked out by himself (these must not be confused with the official Soviet 1926/27 index prices which Mr. Jasny castigates as "phantom prices"—*Sov. Econ.*, p. 10 and elsewhere).

Now according to Mr. Jasny himself, the 1926/27 price pattern "considerably exaggerates the share of net investment and military expenditure in the net national product" (*ibid.*, p. 13). But in addition to any exaggeration in these prices due to natural causes, a substantial measure of exaggeration has been meted out by Mr. Jasny in his method of calculation.

In attempting to establish the extent to which the prices of defence and investment goods increased less than those of consumption goods and education and health

\*THE SOVIET ECONOMY DURING THE PLAN ERA. THE SOVIET PRICE SYSTEM. SOVIET PRICES OF PRODUCERS' GOODS. By N. Jasny. (Food Research Institute of Stanford University and Geoffrey Cumberlege, each \$2.00 or 16/-.)



services, from 1926/27 to 1948, he reaches the conclusion that, for example, investment prices increased 3.15 times, the cost of the armed forces by 5.0 times (*ibid.*, pp. 108-110), but prices of consumption goods by as much as 22 times. He then divides consumption in 1948 prices by a factor of 22, investment by 3.15, and defence by 5, in order to reach his "real 1926/27 prices". As a result, consumption occupies only a small part of the national income, and investments and defence a large part.

But his all-important factors are backed by no kind of substantial evidence. Of his conversion-factor for munitions themselves, he admits its "arbitrary nature". To convert "various expenses" on the armed forces he uses a factor described by him as "more or less an enigma" (*ibid.*, pp. 51, 55). No source is given for his net investment factor of 3.15 in *Sov. Econ.*, as will be seen from p. 110; and in *Soviet Prices of Producers' Goods*, his later book, he revises it upwards to 3.25 and argues that it should be even larger. He acknowledges that this should involve "recalculating a great number of figures including those on investment and national income in 1948 in *The Soviet Economy*, etc."—but informs us that the necessity of doing this "deters the writer from making the revision" (pp. 20, 21.)

The other mainstay of Mr. Jasny's assumptions about defence expenditure is his claim about private consumption. By reducing his estimate of private consumption in current prices to his "real 1926/27 prices" (by the 22: 1 ratio), he is able to claim that per capita consumption in 1948 was below that of 1928. This claim largely rests upon the evidence of his cost-of-living index. A few observations on the procedures used in compiling this index may be made here.

The weights for the index (*Sov. Econ.*, pp. 111-112) are found to be based on budget expenditures of a working family covering only 85% of total expenditures. Using these weights, Mr. Jasny reproduces a figure of 54.3% as the proportion of food expenditures in 1925/26. But as food prices rose more than other living-cost items the larger the weight given to food the greater is the increase in the living cost index. In a family budget covering all expenditures\*, however, the weighting of food items is only 45% (approximately) for these years, and this would reduce the weighted index for food in 1948 by nearly 300 points.

Mr. Jasny's justification for this procedure is that data on the omitted items (covering various social expenditures) are not available. He does not, however, claim

that these items increased at the rate of food expenditures, while the absence of data hardly confers the right to construct a living-cost index on artificial premises. Finally he argues (*Sov. Econ.*, p. 101) that as alcoholic beverages are among the omitted items, and as vodka increased very sharply in price, the latter cancels out any modifying effect of the social expenditures on the index. But as all liquor expenditures accounted for 2-3% of the total expenditures, and as a changed consumption pattern away from vodka to other alcoholic drinks hardly denotes a fall in living standards, this argument can hardly be taken seriously.

The price data both in *Sov. Econ.* and *Soviet Price System* are also inadequate. In order to find the sources for these data, the reader is required to engage in a vain search through the pages of Mr. Jasny's books. To take one example, the price index chart on p.17 of *Soviet Price System* refers the reader to Appendix Table II for data. But there the reader is told that "these data represent a selection from an extensive compilation . . . with citation of sources . . . in a study now in press". (The subsequent work, *Soviet Prices of Producers' Goods*, gives no references to these retail prices either.) Similar treatment is given to the sources of the living-cost-index in *Sov. Econ.* After a series of cross-references the reader is finally given the sources for only part of the price data which includes unpublished material of the U.S. Dept. of Labour, while for the rest he is told that "the sources are too numerous to list". (pp. 27, 58, 111 and 98).

It is natural, therefore, for the reader to wish to check these data. Reference to official sources\* shows that many important food items could be purchased far more cheaply than is indicated by Mr. Jasny for July 1936 (*Soviet Price System* p. 169). Against Mr. Jasny's "Flour 3rd grade" of 2r.40k., rye flour and wheat flour could be purchased for 1r.60k. and 1r.80k. respectively. Beef third grade could be purchased for 5r. against Mr. Jasny's 9r., butter for 13.50k. against 16r., and soap for 70k. against 1r.20k. Mr. Jasny gives no indication of the grades of food to which his prices refer (with the exception of some data on grain products), and variation in the selection of grades of various food items can produce widely different results.

It will be seen that both the weights and the prices he uses in his living-cost and price indexes are highly suspect. His estimate of the share of consumption goods in the national income in 1948 is as un-

\*Byulleten' Finansovovo i Khozyaistvennovo Zakonodatel'stva, 1935, No. 28, pp. 27-31, and No. 31, pp. 19-25; and 1936, No. 19-20, p. 49.

\*Statisticheskyy Spravochnik za 1928, pp. 552-553.

substantiated as are his estimates of capital investment and defence.\*

We have an interesting position. *The Times* relies on Mr. Menken for its knowledge of Soviet military expenditure, Mr. Menken relies on Mr. Jasny. Mr. Jasny, it turns out, relies on "arbitrary" guesswork used in a method of calculation which in any case exaggerates the role of military spending. Has *The Times* met its Waterloo on the campus of Stanford University?

R. W. DAVIES and  
B. I. CAPLAN.

\*Elsewhere Mr. Jasny's estimates of living standards abound in hasty generalisations, unsubstantiated assertions and ambiguities. Three examples will illustrate this. (1) He skirts round the question of higher urban living standards for a larger urban population (he consigns this question to a footnote on p. 67 of *Sov. Econ.*). (2) He uses highly speculative procedure in estimating the average wage (p. 27 *Soviet Price System*). (3) He metes out cavalier treatment to the post-1948 price reductions; for example in whittling down the effect of these price reductions, he provides evidence such as "the upward revision of the house rent was overdue . . . While it is assumed that such a revision occurred, this may be wrong." (!) (p. 60 *Sov. Econ.*).

#### Footnote on a recent Survey of Moscow Living Standards.

THIS survey\*, based upon the collection of data by a visitor to Moscow, illustrates how easily price data may produce very unreal results if incorrectly used. The cost of a British "Human Needs" diet is applied to Soviet prices and appears to demonstrate that the cost to a Moscow family of five for this diet would be 254r. 90k. a week. At the outset it should be noted that dietary habits cannot automatically be transferred from one country to another. While some allowance has been made for this fact, it has frequently been forgotten. For example, 1lb. 9oz. of bacon costing 24r. 90k. is included in the diet, whereas the same quantity of pork can be purchased for 15r. 62k. and of chicken for 10r. 70k.

The method of pricing is itself open to question. The prices of nearly all food-stuffs in the Soviet Union have an upper and a lower limit dependent on grade and quality. On the basis of recently collected price data†, the same food items included in the "Human Needs" diet, with the sole substitution of pork for bacon, could be obtained for 196r. a week if purchased at minimum prices. Thus the minimum cost for this diet would be more than 250r. a month less than the estimate given in this

\*Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics, No. 9-10, 1952, pp. 309-26.

†See *Soviet Studies*, Vol. IV, No. 3, 1953, p. 232. Also *Economie et Humanisme*, No. 73, 1952, *The E.C.E. Report for 1951*, and the 1952 price reductions in *Pravda* 1-4-52.

survey, while the purchase of medium and some good quality foods in the diet (including the substitution of wheat for rye bread), would still only cost 249r. a week.

The estimate for the cost of meals in canteens (5-6 roubles) appears to be too high. According to the observations of other visitors to the Soviet Union\*, a two-course meal including a meat dish cost 4r., and just over 3r. when including fish instead of meat.

Taking these two items alone—the purchase of the cheapest grades of all food items, and allowances for canteen meals at 4r.—a considerable sum (approximately 200r. per month) would have to be added to that allowed in this survey for non-food expenditures. When account is taken of the sharp difference in cost structure (in Britain and in the Soviet Union) of other items such as rent, transport, cultural and social amenities and a number of consumer goods (the survey prices cigarettes at 6r. 50k. for 20, whereas they can be purchased from 1r. 20k. upwards), the comparative picture of British and Soviet living standards given in this survey loses much of its validity.

B. I. CAPLAN.

\*Russia 1952 (BSFS, 6d.).

#### DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS UNDER PETER THE GREAT

THE title of L. A. Nikiforov's book\* accurately defines its contents. It is a study based on Russian archive materials, and on English and Russian printed sources, of diplomatic relations between England and Russia in the Great Northern War. During this war Russia fought for her existence against Swedish invasion, won through, and finally drove the Swedes out to re-establish her power on the eastern coast of the Baltic.

During the first half of the period covered, England was involved in the Spanish Succession War (1701-13), and her main diplomatic concern was to prevent Sweden intervening on the French side in that war. England's policy was therefore to a certain degree pro-Russian, although Peter the Great's proffer of an alliance was never seriously taken up. In the second period, after the Peace of Utrecht, English policy was influenced by the Hanoverian interests of George I (1714-27), which gave it a markedly anti-Russian bias. Throughout the period questions of trade loomed large in the eyes of the British government.

Professor's Nikiforov's book is valuable principally for his detailed analysis of Anglo-Russian diplomacy. But points of

\*RUSSKO-ANGLISKIE OTNOSHENIA PRI PETRE I. (ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS UNDER PETER THE FIRST). By L. N. Nikiforov. (Gospolizdat, 1950, R.5.50.)



general interest emerge. He emphasises, for instance, the attempt of English merchants in the seventeenth century to reduce Russia to a colony to be exploited by them: the Tsar's severance of diplomatic relations with England in 1649 was perhaps not solely due to horror at the execution of Charles I by the English revolutionaries, but to Russian merchants taking advantage of that horror to get English commercial privileges terminated (pp. 10, 11). As late as 1705 we find the English Ambassador in Moscow intervening, on instructions from home, to sabotage the young Russian tobacco industry, which threatened to cut out English imports. He went to the length of kidnapping and shipping back to England two Englishmen who were initiating the Russians into the mysteries of tobacco manufacture; and he destroyed all their machinery with his own hands (pp. 39-41).

The main anxiety of English traders in the northern war was lest Russia should regain a Baltic port. (Professor Nikiforov demonstrates here the "continuity of foreign policy" between Whig and Tory governments: there were shades of difference in their approach to international affairs, but in the last resort both parties put the interests of British trade before anything else. Although the trade route to Moscow *via* Narva (or later St. Petersburg) was far cheaper than the route *via* Archangel (and much less dangerous), English merchants had a virtual monopoly of the northern route and feared they would lose their grip on the Russian trade if Russian power was consolidated on the Baltic coast. Above all they feared that Russian merchants might take their overseas trade into their own hands: the victories of Peter in opening his "window to the west", and the building of St. Petersburg, did in fact finally set Russia free from the danger of colonial subjugation (pp. 67, 101).

On the other hand, once Russia had regained the eastern Baltic coast she enjoyed something approaching a monopoly of the naval stores which England needed so badly (p. 274); and so—however hostile George I with his West German interests might be to Russia—the English merchants would never allow the "cold war" to be carried to a complete severance of relations. As so often in Anglo-Russian relations [the conclusion is mine, not Professor Nikiforov's], the politicians wanted war, the interests of trade demanded peace. Fortunately for both countries, the latter triumphed. **CHRISTOPHER HILL.**

## BYZANTIUM AND THE WEST

EVERY historian, whether like Polybius he admits it or like Ranke he does not, scrutinises the past for clues to the problems and preoccupations of the present. Few historians fail to project into their picture of the past features of the present

as they see it, or—and this is a much more dangerous state of affairs—as they would like others to see it. The history of the East Roman or Byzantine Empire has been a favourite ground for exercises of the latter kind ever since the Renaissance. Recently the exigencies of the cold war have rendered one variety of the exercise a highly marketable commodity in the capitalist world. We are therefore informed, first, that there is no continuity between Greco-Roman civilisation and that of Byzantium; secondly, that Byzantine civilisation is distinct from and alien to "Western Christendom"; and, thirdly, that a continuing offshoot of this alien Byzantine culture is to be found today—where? In Greece? In Turkey? Perish the thought! These nations belong to the North Atlantic Community. No, it is in Russia that this alien and hostile civilisation continues to flourish.

Mr. Lindsay's book\* paints a very different picture—which is no doubt why the *Times Literary Supplement* used it as a peg on which to hang a plea for witch-hunts and loyalty-tests in our universities. He believes that events in the Eastern Empire and in western Europe are part of a single process, the establishment and development of feudal relations of production, that they continually interacted upon one another, that the leading role in this process, whether we regard economic life, political organisation, or artistic activity, was played by Byzantium, at any rate until the twelfth century. Thus baldly stated his thesis may seem to some readers both trivial and abstract. But in the six sections of the book—**The Setting of the Scene; A Summary of Byzantine History; State Forms and Bases and the Forms of Political Struggle; Struggles in the Religious Sphere; Art, Drama, Music, Literature; External Relations and Expansions**—it is supported with a breathless richness of illustration, suggestion, and new points of view. The reviewer found the treatment of religious movements and heresies, and of Byzantine literature (incidentally the fullest discussion of the subject ever published in English), the most satisfying parts of the book.

All Mr. Lindsay's formulations are not equally convincing, and he himself would be the last to claim that he has exhausted his subject: for instance, the mass of material now available on agrarian relations in the later Byzantine empire is hardly drawn upon. But he has written a book almost every page of which will be stimulating and thought-provoking—and perhaps occasionally infuriating—not only to students of the Middle Ages, but to all readers interested in the heritage which we now all share, whether we live in Britain or Byzantium, in Pittsburg or Peking.

**ROBERT BROWNING.**

\***BYZANTIUM INTO EUROPE.** By Jack Lindsay, (The Bodley Head, 37/6.)

## RAINBOW IN GREYS AND BROWNS

CHEKHOV'S literary legacy is so rich (his correspondence counts some two thousand letters written by him and over seven thousand received) that successive publications have not exhausted it yet. The chief merit of Mr. Magarshack's book on Chekhov\* is, perhaps, that of acquainting the English reader with the new material that has been recently appearing in the Soviet Union. His survey of Chekhov's life and work is thorough and comprehensive, and illustrated with many extracts from letters and reminiscences in his own translation. With its detailed chronology of events and its methodic and complete lists of Chekhov's works and of the people with whom Chekhov came into contact, the book will be invaluable as a work of reference.

As a guide to the understanding of Chekhov's personality, however, it is apt to be misleading. There is in Mr. Magarshack's approach to Chekhov a curious undercurrent as of doubt and mistrust (perhaps in reaction to what he describes elsewhere as the "Chekhovian cult"), which manifests itself in a reluctance to accept natural explanations and in a persistent search for something "human, too human". It is on the painful episodes, the moments of disappointment or frustration, that he dwells at greatest length, and he carefully records every chance word of discontent or irritation, so that the essential and revealing side of the picture is obscured and Chekhov's true features are dimmed by a haze of trivialities.

Chekhov's financial difficulties were only too real, but where is his open-handed generosity that had so much to do with them? If we did not know about the many practical results of Chekhov's untiring activity and his careful ways in money matters, we might be left with a general impression of thriftlessness and absence of practical sense. The happy atmosphere which reigned in the hospitable Chekhov home always impressed visitors, yet the picture we get from the book is one of unease and mutual irritation, and Chekhov's hospitality itself is explained away by a morbid horror of solitude. Still less in tune with Chekhov is Mr. Magarshack when he deals with his disease. Chekhov never surrendered to it nor let it destroy his extraordinary faculty of enjoying life and making other people happy, yet the reader is constantly reminded of it and spared none of its harrowing details. Its cold shadow spreads over the whole book. About the brighter side of Chekhov's life, with its gay house-parties and joyous escapades, Mr. Magarshack has much less to say, and when he does speak of it we find little of the fun and sparkle which made old man Grigorovich refer to his

visit to the Chekhovs in Moscow as "a veritable bacchanalia". Altogether we do not see enough of Chekhov, the man of strong will and deep sense of social responsibility, who never spared himself in service to others. By concentrating so much on sickness and disappointment and on the drab details of life which Chekhov particularly detested, Mr. Magarshack loses touch with him, and this must explain why he finds Chekhov's personality baffling and mysterious.

Mr. Magarshack's system of transliteration is logical and phonetic, and his indexes excellent. Some minor corrections suggest themselves: *Bibilin* should read *Bilibin*; *Yozhov* is both spelt and pronounced *Yezhov*; the original Latin spelling of *Ixul* is *Yxkül*; the title of Chekhov's book for children should be translated as "Nonsense-book"; the mysterious "Softboiled boots", which will embarrass some readers, is only familiar Russian slang for "nonsense".

T.S.

## CHEKHOV MADE IN ENGLAND

A PEER mentioned recently in the House of Lords that he had been made a gift of "quite drinkable" whisky made in Japan. The label was very Scotch, but as the word "Scotch" did not appear there was no offence. Mr. Ashmore's version of Chekhov's *Play without a title*\* strongly reminds one of this gift. It may be "quite readable" and even "quite playable", but it is certainly made in England. The book is, however, less modest than the bottle, for it *does* bear the name of Chekhov.

T.S.

\*DON JUAN, IN THE RUSSIAN MANNER. By A. Chekhov. Tr. Basil Ashmore. (Peter Nevill, 10/6.)

## UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES

A CHARACTER in *Harvest* takes as her motto these words she hears in a lecture: To perceive our possibilities, to believe in our possibilities, to make effective use of these unlimited possibilities.

This is the essential theme of these five novels,\* of which the two first are new and the others reprints. In *Harvest*, Vassili, a communist and collective farmer who was badly wounded in the war and reported dead two years before, is finally

\*HARVEST. By G. Nikolayeva. (Collet's/FLPH, 5/-.)

IVAN IVANOVICH. By A. Koptayeva. (Collet's/FLPH, 5/-.)

ALITET GOES TO THE HILLS. By T. Syomushkin. (Collet's/FLPH, 5/-.)

WIND FROM THE SOUTH. By Elmar Green. (Collet's/FLPH, 3/6.)

A STORY ABOUT A REAL MAN. By B. Polevoy. (Collet's/FLPH, 5/6.)

(All at 3/- in RTD Book Club.)

\*CHEKHOV, A LIFE. By David Magarshack. (Faber and Faber, 30/-.)

discharged from hospital in 1946. He returns home without sending any message, in order to give his wife a surprise. Entering the house at night, he finds her in bed with another man, whom she has "married", believing her husband dead.

Vassili insists on the other man leaving, and he does. But the wife, Avdotya, has grown to love the other man, from whom she has received the tenderness and understanding which Vassili, who considers a wife's part is to obey and serve her husband, has denied her. The authoress treats with understanding the relations between husband and wife; but they have other problems, for the farm to which Vassili returns is, in the words of the Party District Secretary, "the worst farm of the hardest district in the hardest region".

Vassili has the responsibility of putting the farm on its feet, but when Avdotya tells him she wants to work on the farm he snorts: "What will you do? Feed the pigs?" Nevertheless, she begins work on the stock-farm, studies the subject, and, sick at heart at Vassili's treatment of her, leaves him.

In order to build up the farm Vassili has to change his approach to people and learn to give enthusiasm and inspiration rather than snap and bully. And out of the change in the farm comes a change in Vassili and Avdotya, who in the end come together in an equal and mutually satisfactory relationship never previously achieved.

The authoress not only succeeds in interweaving the twin threads of the personal and political lives of Vassili and Avdotya; she also creates a host of convincing minor characters. The electrician who starts by looking down on country people, the capable yet conceited master mechanic, the slapdash girl with the latent gift of leadership—these people are as real as those with whom we ourselves live and work.

In *Ivan Ivanovich*, a gifted neurosurgeon, Ivan Ivanovich Arzhanov, is head of a hospital in the far north. His wife Olga\* has studied numerous subjects without finishing any of them, and after the death of her only child she becomes a full-time wife with nothing to do.

Not unnaturally, Dr. Arzhanov, though he loves her, does not regard her as an equal, while she, with equal justice, resents his lack of interest in her attempts to make a career. When, with the encouragement of another man, Tavrov, she develops a flair for writing, he sneers at it. Finally she leaves him to live with Tavrov, and, unlike Avdotya, never comes back.

The authoress writes with unmistakable sincerity and courage, and it is interesting that she is not afraid to show the Party District Secretary (a very different man

from the one in *Harvest*) as a bureaucratic and narrowminded nagger. Her descriptions of operations are vivid, but her characters, other than Olga, tend to lack vitality and seem described rather than recreated.

The author of *Alitet Goes to the Hills* did not begin his book about the Chukchi people of the Far North till he had learned to think in their language. The Chukchi themselves are the main characters in this fascinating story of how a nomadic people, living on fishing and reindeer-herding, were encouraged by the representatives of the Soviet Government to drive out their own native oppressors, turn their backs on cruel and superstitious customs, and re-create their lives on a co-operative basis.\*

*Wind from the South*, though rather monotonously written and lacking in characterisation—an impression which may well be largely due to the very unsatisfactory translation—does give an insight into Finland between 1939 and 1945, as seen through the eyes of a simple Finnish peasant. The hero, who works for his farmer-boss from morning till night, accepts poverty as his lot until his experiences during the war finally make him realise that he has been exploited and deceived, and the book ends on a note of courage and hope for the future.

Especially welcome is the reprint of *A Story about a Real Man*. This novel, in the tradition of N. Ostrovsky's *The Making of a Hero* (or *How the Steel Was Tempered*), describes how an airman who has lost both his feet struggles with despair and physical difficulties until he finally possesses once more mastery of the air—and of himself.

JOHN VICKERS.

\*The Chukchi had no written language before the October Revolution, and of course no writers or non-oral literature. In "Novy Mir" No. 12, 1952, there appeared two stories translated into Russian from the Chukhot of the first writer in the history of this Far Northern people, Rytkeu. He is twenty-two and is studying at the Northern Peoples Faculty of Leningrad University.

## THE BRIGHT FUTURE

FRANK HARDY, the Australian novelist of *Power Without Glory* fame, visited Europe in 1951 to attend the Berlin peace conference. The Union of Soviet Writers took this opportunity to invite him to visit their country. With his wife, who had accompanied him to Europe, he spent five weeks touring the USSR; he has now told the story of those exciting weeks\*. In his easy readable laconic style he has packed a wealth of information into this volume of 336 pages.

\*See "It Isn't True to Life," by B. Rurikov, in *Anglo-Soviet Journal* Vol. XIII, No. 4 (Winter 1952-53).

\*JOURNEY INTO THE FUTURE. By Frank J. Hardy. (Australasian Book Society/Colelet's, 8/6.)

This book will be of tremendous value in the years ahead to help spread the truth about the Soviet Union. Everyone who values friendship between our countries should have a copy. Here is a fine weapon for our fight for the recognition of that friendship. Hardy calls the citizens of the Soviet Union the best educated nation in the world: I spent three weeks last September following the same route as the Hardys (Moscow, Tbilisi and Stalingrad) as a member of a British delegation, and I agree with his verdict. The love of culture, and the acknowledgment by the Soviet Government of the value of culture, is the most stimulating thing in a country abounding with progressive moves towards a higher civilisation. The confidence of citizens reared in such an atmosphere has to be met to be believed. Artistic creative abilities are given every encouragement; this has naturally resulted in a flowering of the arts and sciences.

In chapter 7, *Two Hundred Million Dreamers*, Hardy records his conversation with a Russian friend in Stalingrad who says: "Come back in a year's time, and you will be able to travel all the way from Melbourne to Moscow by ship." This was to be made possible by the completion of the Volga-Don Canal; I was in Stalingrad a year later, almost to the day, and to be sure the great Volga-Don Canal was ready, and one could sail from Moscow to Melbourne.

Hardy ends this fascinating story of a new and great civilisation with these prophetic and stimulating words: "But the truth cannot be hidden for ever; it is getting out. And I will get this book to the people if it has to be peddled from factory to factory, from house to house."

DOUGLAS COLTON.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- ART AND SOCIAL LIFE. By G. V. Plekhanov. (*Lawrence & Wishart*, 21/-.)
- BETRAYED SPRING. Jack Lindsay. (*The Bodley Head*, 15/-.)
- CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVES IN THE SOVIET UNION. (*Centrosoyus*, unpriced.)
- DANCE AND DRAMA IN BALI. Beryl de Zoete and Walter Spies. (*Faber & Faber*, 63/-.)
- JOURNEY FOR OUR TIME. The Marquis de Custine. (*Arthur Barker*, 16/-.)
- LENIN: AN EPIC POEM. By J. Paulden. (Published by the author, 3/-.)
- MODERN RUSSIAN READER FOR INTERMEDIATE CLASSES. Lila Pargment. (*Pitman*, 16/-.)
- NEW RUSSIAN STORIES. Tr. B. J. Gurney. (*Peter Owen*, 15/-.)
- OXFORD SLAVONIC PAPERS, Vol. III. Ed. S. Kononov. (*Clarendon Press*, 12/6.)
- PETYA AND THE COCK. By V. Ivanov. THE ACTRESS. By I. Ehrenburg. (*Methuen's Russian Readers*, 3/9.)
- RUMANIAN SUMMER. Jack Lindsay and Maurice Cornforth. (*Lawrence & Wishart*, 5/-.)
- SOVIET STUDIES, IV, 3 (January 1953). (*Blackwell*, 9/-.)
- THE RUSSIAN MENACE TO EUROPE. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. (*Allen & Unwin*, 20/-.)

## MAYAKOVSKY

### Symposium of readings, appreciations and film show

TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 1953

7 p.m.

Watch the press for further details

# SCR NOTES

## LONDON MEETINGS AND OTHER EVENTS

January-March 1953

(All at 14 Kensington Square unless otherwise stated)

### January

- 8th: Lecture. *Recent Developments in Soviet Music*. Alan Bush. (**Music Section.**)
- 13th: Lecture. *The International Chess Team Tournament at Helsinki*. H. Golombek. (Captain of the British Team). Chair: Professor L. S. Penrose. (**Chess Section.**)
- 15th: Film. *Shevchenko*. Introductory talk by Brian Pearce. (**Film Section and Writers' Group.**)
- 19th: Lecture and Film. *Moscow in Construction*. A. Ling, ARIBA., and J. Pinckheard, ARIBA. Chair: F. Skinner, ARIBA. (**Architecture Section.**)
- 20th: Lecture. *Schmidt's Theory of the Origin of the Earth*. Dr. M. J. Seaton. Chair: Professor L. Hawkes, FRS. (**Science Section.**)
- 25th: Playreading. *The Magic Pipe*, by V. Volsky. Producer: Donald Bisset. (**Theatre Section.**)
- 29th: Lecture. *Transport and Industry in the New Five-Year Plan*. P. A. Keen and C. H. Creighton. (**Social Sciences Section.**)
- 31st: Discussion. *Problems of Translation*. Report by E. Fox. (**Translators' Group.**)

### February

- 5th. Lecture. *First Impressions of the Soviet Union*. Miles Malleson. (**Theatre Section.**)
- 10th: Lecture. *Russia and the Eastern People of the USSR*. Brian Pearce. (**History Section.**)
- 12th: Lecture. *Discipline in the Soviet School*. Deana Levin. Chair: Mary Baxter, JP. At the Institute of Education, University of London. (**Education Section.**)
- 17th: Film. *Academician Pavlov*. Introductory talk by Dr. L. Crome. (**Medical Section.**)
- 19th: Lecture. *Agriculture in the New Five-Year Plan*. J. Dunman. Chair: V. Duncan-Jones. (**Social Sciences Section.**)
- 24th: Lecture. *City Government and Planning in the USSR*. Monica Felton. (**Architecture Section.**)

### March

- 3rd: Lecture. *Developments in Soviet Clinical Medicine*. Dr. A. McPherson. (**Medical Section.**)
- 12th: STALIN MEMORIAL MEETING. James Aldridge; Professor J.D. Bernal, FRS; Professor V. G. Childe; Dr. H. Joules, FRCP; Miles Malleson; Dr. S. M. Manton, FRS; Ewart Milne. Chair: D. N. Pritt, Q.C. At the Hammersmith Town Hall.

### March (cont.)

- 12th: Lecture. *Byzantium*. Jack Lindsay. Chair: W. Watson. **(History Section.)**
- 17th: Film. *Childhood of Maxim Gorky*. Readings by Caron Rock, Joan Rodker and Catherine Salkeld. Talks by Harold Rosen and John Vickers. At Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road. **(Film Section and Writers' Group.)**
- 19th: Film. *Time in the Sun*. Produced by Marie Seton from Eisenstein material (*Que Viva Mexico!*) **(Film Section.)**
- 21st: Social evening (*Vecherinka*).
- 24th: Lecture. *Some Recent Developments in Soviet Physics*. Dr. E. H. S. Burhop. **(Science Section.)**
- 25th: Films. A programme of Soviet Films for children, in connection with the Education Section's Annual General Meeting. **(Education Section.)**
- 26th: Lecture. *The National Income, Social Services and Consumer Goods in the New Five-Year Plan*. R. W. Davies and B. I. Caplan. **(Social Sciences Section.)**
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## SUMMER FAIR

PREPARATIONS are now in hand for the SCR Summer Fair on Saturday, June 27, and contributions of goods for sale and offers of help with stalls and entertainments will be warmly welcomed.

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### SCR PROVINCIAL SECRETARIES

Readers of THE ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL may wish to get in touch with the Secretary of the local SCR Committee so that they may be kept informed of local SCR activities. The following list is appended for their convenience.

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# SCR

## Recent Translations, Surveys and Bulletins

**ARCHITECTURE** : *New Types of Building Materials*. By A. N. Popov. *Review of Soviet Architectural Journals*. **Arch. 33**. 2/- (1/6). ~ *The Building Industry in the USSR*. By C. M. Hall. *Architects and the New Five-Year Plan*. By B. Rubanenko. **Arch. 34**. 1/6 (1/-).

**CHESS** : *The World's Championship Zonal Winners' Tournament in Stockholm*. **Ch. 44**. 1/-. ~ *The 20th Championship of the USSR*. **Ch. 45**. 1/-.

**EDUCATION** : *Polytechnisation*. **Ed. 14**. 1/6 (1/-). ~ *Two Secondary School History Syllabuses (History of the Ancient World and History of the Middle Ages)*. **Ed. 15**. 2/- (1/6).

**LITERATURE** : *Recent Soviet Novels. The Soviet Short Story. News of the Soviet Literary Scene. History of Soviet Russian Literature*. **WG. 3**. 1/6 (1/-). ~ *The Typical in Literature. The Nekrassov Anniversary. Recent Soviet Novels. Obituary Notices. Notes and News*. **WG. 4**. 1/6 (1/-). ~ *Taras Shevchenko, 1814-1861*. By Brian Pearce. 6d.

**MEDICINE** : *The Soviet Health Services under the Fifth Five-Year Plan. The Treatment of Typhoid Fever with Sintomycin. Some Problems of Hypertensive Disease*. **Med. 3**. 2/6 (1/9). ~ *A Reply to American Critics of Pavlov*. By Professor F. P. Mayorov, M.D. **Pav. 5**. 3/- (2/-).

**SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING** : *Polytechnical Education. Soviet Machine Tools. Catalogues of Soviet Scientific Periodicals Received by the SCR Library in 1952. Notes and News*. **Sci. 2**. 1/6 (1/-).

**SOCIAL SCIENCES** : *Place and Function of the Press in Soviet Society*. By B. I. Caplan. **Soc. Sci. 3**. 1/6 (1/-). ~ *The National Income and Consumer Goods in the Fifth Five-Year Plan*. By R. W. Davies and B. I. Caplan. **Soc. Sci. 4**. 1/6 (1/-).

### ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL

THE Winter 1952-53 issue of the ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL (Volume XIII, No. 4) is a special Five-Year Plan issue, with articles by Maurice Dobb, G. R. Barker, D. T. Richnell and C. H. Creighton on different aspects of the 1951-55 Plan.

The issue also contains an important contribution to literary criticism by B. Rurikov (Deputy Chief Editor of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*), travel notes by Miles Malleson, delegates' reports by Professor Bernard Stevens (music) and John Pinckheard (architecture), illustrations by "Vicky," and book reviews by Professor J. D. Bernal, FRS, Professor C. L. Wrenn, D. N. Pritt, QC, and others.

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### **Notes on the Soviet Educational System.**

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**Children's Clubs and Camps** (in the Moscow area, Leningrad, Tbilisi and Erevan).

### **Higher Education.**

**Discussions with Leading Soviet Educationists** (the RSFSR Minister of Education, and members of the RSFSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences).

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